THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PLAUTUS AND MOLIÈRE

A study of the differences in the treatment of the same themes as seen by a comparison of the *Amphitruo* and *Aulularia* of the one with the *Amphitryon* and *L'Avare* of the other.

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Summary

As writers of comedy, Plautus and Molière stand in the first rank. Each is foremost in this genre in his own period.

Quite naturally in consideration of the eighteen hundred years of time which separates them, it is not to be expected that either of them would handle the same material in the same way. If we are to summarize the reasons for the changes which Molière made, we might be justified in thinking that minor and sometimes major alterations in plot and scene were made necessary by the actual physical differences between the respective theatres in which the plays were produced, but that the really important reworking of the Plautine plays was that which was made essential by the differences between the respective audiences and societies. Tastes and fashions in comedy change and the playwright must meet the fashion if he is to be heard. In addition, the objectives of the two playwrights appear to have been sharply contrasted. This fact, in turn, had an impact on the works of Molière.

It was necessary, then, for Molière to rework Plautus' plays before presenting them as his own. As written by Plautus, they would not have been as great a success with the French public. The plays of Molière are not necessarily better than those of Plautus. It is equally likely that a play of Molière's would not have appealed to a Plautine audience. Each author wrote for his own period. Certainly the results were happy for both of them.

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Foreword

Plautus, who lived, according to tradition, from 254 to 184 B.C., is known to us as the foremost writer of Roman Comedy. The particular genre in which he excelled was called the Fabula Palliata, because the characters dressed in the Greek pallium, and the scene was set not in Rome, or Italy, but in Greece, and, usually, in Athens. Also, the plays themselves were derived from Greek originals, chiefly from that period of Greek Comedy known as the New Comedy or νέα. This comedy portrayed the contemporary social life of Athens, and consisted mainly of variations on the same themes with the same sets of characters.[1] Plautus' plays in turn provided the source material for many of the first European comedies.[2]

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[1] T. Macci Plauti, Menaechmi, ed. P. Thoresby Jones (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1918), p. 10.

[2] Thus the Amphitruo was imitated frequently. Examples: Jacke Juggler (ca 1550), a translation called The Birthe of Hercules (not before 1600), inspiration for Shakespeare's double mystification in the Comedy of Errors, and a great part of the plot of Heywood's Silver Age. In the sixteenth century in Europe the play was much imitated: three Spanish imitations, two Italian and one Portuguese. There was even a Christianized version in 1621 in which Alcmena became the Virgin Mary. In France, in the seventeenth century, Rotrou closely adapted the Amphitryon, and then Molière attempted it. In England, Dryden followed Molière, Garrick "purified" it, as did Hawkesworth. Kleist in 1807 reworked the plot; the Amphitruo has been the subject of operas, and in our own era, Giraudoux has adapted it, and so has Kaiser.
Cf., Plautus, Amphitruo, ed. W. B. Sedgwick (Manchester: University Press, 1960), p. 6 ff.

In composing his Fabulae Palliatae, Plautus apparently did make certain changes in his Greek sources.[1] In the same way, eighteen hundred years later, Molière, the outstanding playwright of French comedy, adapted a number of Plautus' plays to suit the French theatre.[2] In none is his dependence on his Plautine originals more evident than in his Amphitryon and L'Avare, based respectively on Plautus' Amphitruo and Aulularia.

Despite the obvious borrowing from Plautus in these two above-mentioned plays, just as Plautus altered his Greek originals, so Molière made quite considerable changes in the Plautine plays. The purpose of this study is, by comparing these particular plays, to suggest reasons for some of the changes made by Molière. It is at once granted that some of the changes are inexplicable. On the other hand, it seems possible that certain of the alterations may be explained by differences in the physical plan and traditions of the respective theatres in the days of Plautus and Molière, in the differing attitudes of the two societies which were involved, and even in a contrast between the personal characteristics and objectives of the authors themselves.

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1 In general these known sources seem to be Menander, Philemon, and lesser dramatists of the same school. Jones, op. cit., p. 11. Although the sources of the Amphitruo are unknown, a possible example of changes made would be the apparently deliberate Romanization of the report of the battle given by Sosia in the Amphitruo, lines 203-260.

2 Among others may be cited Monsieur de Pourceaugnac and Le Sicilien.
~~S.V.~~, Molière, Oeuvres, ed. Eugene Despois and Paul Mesnard (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1881), VI, p. 224 and VII, p. 219.

In an attempt to make the suggestions clear, this study will consider the four plays under the following headings:

1. Plots of the plays
2. Reasons for the changes
    a. Differing theatrical traditions and development.
    b. Differences in the physical nature of the theatre, stage and production.
    c. Differences in the type of audience and consequently in the two societies which produced the audiences.
    d. Differences in the personalities and objectives of the two authors.
3. A summary of conclusions.

CHAPTER I

The Plots of the Plays

The Amphitruo of Plautus is our one surviving example in Latin and Greek Comedy of what is called mythological travesty, a comedy in which fun is made at the expense of the gods, although we do have a number of titles of the same genre from the Greek.[1] This form of comedy is regarded by some authorities as part of the transition from the Greek Old Comedy to the New, particularly since in the Frogs of Aristophanes there is a satire on the gods.[2]

The sources of the Amphitruo are unknown. There was an Amphitryo by Sophocles and an Alcmena by Euripides. Plato's νὺξ μακρά seems to be a possibility. There are two well known vase paintings showing Zeus carrying a ladder to climb up to a window out of which Alcmena is looking. Some have thought that the source of the play is the Amphitryon of the Sicilian, Rhinthon, a burlesque which we do not possess.[3] None of these, however, seem to have been the direct source. Sedgwick sums up the problem, saying "...the myth as we have it in Plautus started from Sophocles' Amphitryo, and reached the New Comedy via Plato. P.'s source was a play of the New Comedy, though

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[1] The Alcestes, Bacchae and Andromeda of Antiphanes. Vide, Wilmer Cave Wright, A Short History of Greek Literature (New York: American Book Company, 1907), p. 306.

[2] Alfred Korte, Hellenistic Poetry, trans. Jacob Hammer and Moses Hadas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 17.

[3] T. Macci Plauti, Amphitruo, ed. Arthur Palmer (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890), p. XIV, XV.

he may have taken hints from South Italian farce. But he who made possible P.'s play was the unknown poet who first added Sosia."[1]

Although we do not have the play which served as the source, we may surmise that in plot structure, if not in tone or detail, Plautus followed his original fairly closely. His version of the plot is as follows:

Amphitruo and his newly married wife are resident in Thebes. Creon, the king of Thebes, has given Amphitruo the command of his army against the piratical Teleboae. Amphitruo departs, leaving his wife pregnant. During his absence, Jupiter becomes enamoured of Alcumena and assumes the guise of Amphitruo, Mercury at the same time taking the dress and form of Amphitruo's slave, Sosia. Jupiter visits Alcumena, pretending that he has returned from the conquest of the Teleboae, tells her that he killed the king, Pterelaus, and gives her as a parting gift the golden bowl of the king. The night has been preternaturally lengthened. Amphitruo, victorious, has returned by ship to the harbour of Thebes and sends Sosia during the night to his house to give Alcumena tidings of his safe arrival. Sosia, finding Mercury on guard, is driven away by what seems to be his own self and returns to the harbour to recount this strange occurrence. He and an angry Amphitruo set out for the house. They arrive at daybreak, just after Jupiter has left. Amphitruo is angry at his wife's apparent lack of excitement at seeing him, and mystified and distressed by her assertion that he had spent the night with her.

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[1] Sedgwick, op. cit., p. 6.

Convinced of her infidelity, he determines to divorce her, and announces his intention of appealing to Naucrates, his wife's relation, but his fellow-passenger, to prove to Alcumena that her statement is false. Jupiter returns to make his peace with Alcumena, and Mercury as Sosia awaits the return of Amphitruo, who cannot find Naucrates. Mercury throws water on Amphitruo who, in a scene which is almost entirely lost, meets Jupiter as himself and is judged by Blepharo, his helmsman, as not being the real Amphitruo and nearly goes mad. He is in the act of breaking into his house and massacring all, when he is struck by a thunderbolt and falls to the ground. Bromia, a maidservant, finds him thus and relates the birth of twins as well as the killing of two serpents by one of the newborn children. Amphitruo is about to consult the seer Tiresias, when Jupiter appears, as the king of the gods, and explains all.

The play is, therefore, fairly straightforward. It cannot be original, although some commentators call it the most original of all the plays of Plautus, because there is a Roman tone throughout it.[1] Thus the account given by Sosia of the campaign against the Teleboae, the ultimatum of Amphitruo, the demand for restitution, the threat in case of refusal, the slaying of the enemy's commander-in-chief by Amphitruo himself--all these particulars are in Livian style.[2]

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[1] Palmer, op. cit., p. XV.

[2] T. Macci Plauti, Comoedia, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), I, Amphitruo, lines 203-260.

Then, Alcumena is a true Roman wife, fulfilling the Roman conception of an equal consort with great dignity and perfection. The attitude toward the gods may well be Roman--an attitude of a rather guarded respect. Some of the remarks of Sosia and Amphitruo about slaves would seem to be Roman in tone. Thus, says Sosia,

> "Ibo ad portum atque haec uti sunt facta ero dicam meo;
> Nisi etiam is quoque me ignorabit; quod ille faxit Iuppiter
> Ut ego hodie raso capite calvas capiam pilleum."[1]

Also, the punishments of the slave sound Roman rather than Greek.[2] Without recourse to the unknown original, it is difficult to identify much more as Roman in quality.

When Molière decided to take over this play and make it his own, it was under rather difficult circumstances. The play was first shown at the Palais-Royal theatre on Friday, January 13, 1668; the next performance was at the same place on Sunday, January 15, 1668; and the third was presented to the king at the Tuileries.[3] There had been a rather long interval, long for Molière, at any rate, between the Amphitryon and his last new play, the Sicilien. Molière was depressed and was keeping rather quiet. During this period Louis XIV was fighting the Flanders' campaign and Molière was having difficulty with Tartuffe, which had been banned. While Louis XIV was in Flanders, his affair with Mme. de Montespan began, an affair which her husband took badly. Many people have taken Molière's play as a

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[1] Ibid., lines 460-463.

[2] Ibid., lines 589-591.

[3] Despois, op. cit., VI, Amphitryon, p. 323.

direct commentary on this liaison.[1] Whether this is so or not, it was certainly a dramatic play to present at the court.

The changes made by Molière in the play of Plautus were not major ones. The basic plot remained the same; that is, it was still the story of how Jupiter conceived a passion for Alcmène, of the way in which he accomplished his design, and of the reaction of Alcmène's husband to the situation. But Molière did make some changes in actual structure, and several subtler changes.

The first structural change is in the Prologue. Where Plautus used Mercury to explain the plot and quiet the audience, Molière has created a dialogue between Mercury and Night. This prologue is considered by many the finest portion of Molière's play.[2] He has added a new character, Cléanthis, wife of Sosie, who appears first when Jupiter and Mercury are leaving, and mistakes Mercury for Sosie.[3] Extra scenes are added for this character and Sosie.[4] The lacuna in Plautus' Amphitruo after Mercury pours water on the husband is filled in by Molière as follows:

Mercury, instead of pouring water on Amphitryon, tells him that Amphitryon is within with Alcmène enjoying a pleasant talk. He then leaves him. Sosie appears with Naucrates and Polidas, officers of

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[1] Ibid., p. 316 ff.

[2] Ibid., p. 324.

[3] Ibid., Act I, Scene III and IV, line 620 ff.

[4] Ibid., Act II, Scene III; Act II, Scene V; Act III, Scene VII; Act III, Scene IX.

the army. When Amphitryon tries to beat Sosie because of his rudeness, the officers state that he has been with them constantly. Jupiter, in the guise of Amphitryon, appears. Naucrates and Polidas cannot decide which is the real, which the false Amphitryon. Sosie immediately chooses Jupiter. Amphitryon, in a rage, draws his sword; his friends prevent him from violence and follow Jupiter into the house for dinner while awaiting clarification. Sosie attempts to join them, is rebuffed by Mercury as Sosie and sadly leaves to join the true Amphitryon, who at this instant is arriving with Argotiphontidas and Pausicles, two Theban captains. Now Mercury reveals a part of the story, and flies to heaven, sick of wearing such an ugly face.

> "Je suis las de porter un visage si laid,
> Et je m'en vais au ciel, avec de l'ambrosie
> M'en débarbouiller tout à fait."[1]

Jupiter appears on his eagle, explains the story, announces the birth to come and vanishes.

The structural changes made by Molière in Plautus' work are, therefore, minor. With reference to the subtler changes of attitude and detail, one of the more striking is in the reaction to the gods. This is shown in Night's criticism of Jupiter in the Prologue,[2] in Mercury's apologies for himself,[3] and in Amphitryon's joyless state at the end of the play, as commented on by Sosie.[4]

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[1] Ibid., lines 1883-1885.

[2] Ibid., lines 92-102; 120-124.

[3] Ibid., lines 1490-1497.

[4] Ibid., line 1913, 1928-1943.

Another important change is seen in the attitude toward love, as expressed by Jupiter[1] and by Amphitryon,[2] and, to a lesser degree, by Alcmène[3] herself. Alcmène receives a cluster of five diamonds as spoils of war, not a golden bowl. The report of the battle as told by Sosie to himself varies greatly from the Roman version--and is much shorter.[4] And Sosie, when escaping from the battle, did not draw off a jug full of wine and,

"Eam ego, et matre fuerat natum, vini eduxi meri"[5]

but found himself a ham and,

"Je coupai bravement deux tranches succulentes
Dont je sus fort bien me bourrer"[6]

Details of this sort were enough to change the tone from Latin to French. The discussion of the reasons for these changes will be deferred until later. Here it is sufficient to notice that changes in the basic plot are minor.

When we turn to the changes made in Plautus' Aulularia to create Molière's L'Avare, it will be found that the French author did a major job of reconstruction. Yet the Aulularia is considered one of

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1 Ibid., lines 565-576, lines 580-607.

2 Ibid., lines 1439-1489.

3 Ibid., lines 1038-1047.

4 Ibid., lines 235-258.

5 Lindsay, op. cit., line 430.

6 Despois, op. cit., lines 499-500.

Plautus' stronger plays.[1] It stands alone among the comedies of Plautus as a character piece.[2] The model followed by Plautus is unknown; it does, however, seem obvious from some features scarcely intelligible to a Roman audience that he did follow a Greek model.[3] Says Thomas, "We are thus left with no more definite conclusion than that the original was some play of the New Comedy."[4]

The plot is quite simple and direct. The scene is Athens, and shows a street with the house of Euclio, a miser, the house of his neighbour, the wealthy Megadorus, and the temple of Fides. In front stands the usual altar. Euclio has recently found a pot of gold. The Lar explains in the Prologue that the gold had been hidden by Euclio's grandfather, who was too miserly to reveal its existence even on his death bed. The Lar has told Euclio about it, because he wishes to help Euclio's daughter, Phaedria. However, Euclio's miserly characteristics increase with the discovery of the gold. The daughter has been violated by Lyconides at the feast of Ceres, and is about to bear a child. Megadorus, encouraged by his sister, the mother of Lyconides, decides to take a wife and chooses Phaedria. Then Megadorus speaks to Euclio; after some hesitation he agrees and

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[1] J. Wight Duff, A Literary History of Rome (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1909), p. 177.

[2] T. Macci Plauti, Aulularia, ed. E. J. Thomas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. V.

[3] Ibid., line 504, line 760.

[4] Ibid., page V.

sets the wedding for the same day. Both go to make preparations, and Strobilius, the slave of Megadorus, returns from the market with cooks and purchases. Euclio also comes from the market empty-handed, finds preparations going on in his house, and, terrified that his gold may be stolen, turns out Congrio, the cook, and his companions until he can again make sure of his treasure. Afraid to leave it there any longer, he hides it in the temple of Fides, but finds that the slave of Lyconides has been watching him. After carefully searching the slave, he takes his treasure away to hide it in the grove of Silvanus. However, the slave, bent upon revenge, continues to watch him. Next, Lyconides explains to his mother his claim upon the miser's daughter and begs her to appeal to his uncle to give up his intention. At this point Phaedria is heard giving birth. Meanwhile, the slave of Lyconides has stolen Euclio's treasure, and Euclio is nearly maddened as a result. Lyconides, hearing the enraged shouts, believes Euclio has discovered the secret about Phaedria and goes to apologize. Since Euclio thinks that he is talking about a pot of gold, not a daughter, the conversation is rather entertaining. When the matter is straightened out, Lyconides promises to help find the pot and finds his slave, who admits having found the pot and asks to be manumitted. Lyconides takes the gold from him--and the story ends, for the last of the play is lost, although it seems most likely that the gold is returned, the young couple united, and the slave probably freed.

[illegible]

The Roman elements found in this play would not seem to be important. One obvious one is in the treatment of the slaves, particularly in the demand for manumission and in the beating[1] of the nurse, Staphyla. Another may be the household Lar and the honours paid it.[2] Euclio's speech about the oxen and the donkeys sounds[3] indeed to be Roman in concept. If the tirade of Megadorus against the luxury of women[4] does refer, as has been supposed, to conditions after the repeal of the Oppian Law in 195 B.C., then this is an example of deliberate Romanization with reference to Roman mores. There has been, however, much discussion of this point.[5] Even if the reference is not to the Oppian Law, there is in this portion of the play discussion of the Roman system of dowries, of debt, and of the army tax. The shrine to Faith is a Roman touch,[6] and so is the sacrifice before the wedding.[7] So, as in the Amphitruo, is the calling upon Juno Lucina[8] at birth, and for that matter, the feast of Ceres. Thus by numerous small additions the play achieves something of a Roman atmosphere.

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[1] Ibid., lines 815-830; lines 40-51.

[2] Ibid., Prologue, lines 1-40.

[3] Ibid., lines 225-235.

[4] Ibid., lines 475-536.

[5] Ibid., page V.

[6] Ibid., lines 580 to 586.

[7] Ibid., line 612.

[8] Ibid., line 692.

Molière took this somewhat uncomplicated play of Plautus and made it very nearly a comedy of manners. With reference to major changes in structure, we must note first of all the change in the central figure, the miser. He is no longer a comic figure, ludicrous in his terrors, but is avarice personified, and almost frightening in his intensity. Around the miser, Harpagon, revolve two love affairs, for the miser now has two children, a daughter and a son. The daughter, Élise, is in love with a noble youth, Valère, who is pretending to be a valet so that he may be close to Élise. The son, Cléante, loves Mariane, a poor but honest maiden who lives with her sickly mother. Harpagon himself intends to marry Mariane. Anselme, father to Valère and Mariane, although he does not know it, for he believes his family dead--as they believe him to be--is about to marry Élise. Other characters have been added. There is Master Jacques, cook and coachman to Harpagon, who replaces aged Staphlya, and La Flèche, valet to Cleante, who replaces Lyconides; there are two lackeys, Brindavoine and La Merluche; there is Master Simon, a broker, and Frosine, an intriguing woman.

The play opens with Valère and Élise discussing their love, and the steps which they can take to further it. It is decided that Valère will continue to flatter Harpagon, in hopes of winning him over, and Élise will try to enlist her brother to their cause. Cléante tells Élise of his love for Mariane. They retreat to the garden as their father appears. He believes La Flèche is trying to steal his gold, and we have the famous search scene, borrowed almost intact from Plautus, here. Harpagon next quarrels with Cléante about his

extravagances and announces that he, Harpagon, intends to marry Mariane. When Cléante, wretched, leaves, the cruel man informs Élise that she is that very evening to marry Mr. Anselme. When Élise refuses, Harpagon turns her over to Valère, who is to convince her. Now Cléante appears with La Flèche, who reads to him the fantastic terms of the usurer who is to lend him money. Naturally, this French Shylock is Harpagon, and father and son quarrel again. Frosine appears; she is managing the Mariane affair for Harpagon. The miser is to hold a little party for the betrothal of his daughter. He instructs his servants in their duties. Mariane, accompanied by Frosine, appears and sees Cléante whom she recognizes as the young man with whom she is in love. Cléante welcomes her heartily on the part of his father. When Harpagon is called away, they make plans. The miser, returning unexpectedly, sees his son kissing the hand of Mariane, and tricks him into admitting his love. Father and son quarrel, are falsely reconciled, and quarrel again. Now La Flèche steals the miser's pot of gold. Harpagon finds his loss, nearly goes mad, and calls in the police. He and Valère have the misunderstanding about pot and daughter which has already occurred in Plautus. Mr. Anselme arrives, learns that his wife lives and that Valère and Mariane are his children, agrees to pay all expenses for all weddings, to which Harpagon agrees when he learns that he will get back his pot of money.

These are major plot changes--indeed it is hard to discover much of Plautus' play in this. There are subtler changes too. Thus, the attitude toward love has become completely formalized.[1] Notice too the part which unmarried women play in the action. The young men are no longer full of wine and love, violating young women. Indeed the initiating incident of Élise and Valère's love affair is a noble act--Valère has saved the girl from drowning. The extravagances referred to are no longer women's, but men's.[2] Naturally the social customs of the periods are very different--witness the preparations for the wedding in L'Avare.[3] But the important change to notice is the change in the character of Harpagon, for it influences the whole play.

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[1] Despois, op. cit., Act I, Scene I.

[2] Ibid., Act I, Scene IV.

[3] Ibid., Act II, Scene I, II, V.

CHAPTER II

The Differing Theatrical Traditions

In the period before Plautus, and even during his lifetime, the Romans had been developing or importing from other parts of Italy what may be termed a "native" Italian comedy. Such were the bawdy Versus Fescennini,[1] sung at weddings and triumphs, the Fabula Atellana,[2] supposedly introduced from Campania, the Saturae,[3] said by Livy to have been introduced from Etruria, and the Mimus,[4] apparently brought in from the Greek cities.

Of these forms, the Versus Fescennini had the elements of comedy in them, but were not true dramatic productions. They were merry, indecent, rustic, impromptu banter, from which dialogue with gestures was developed.[5] The Fabula Atellana, however, while it seemed to depend largely on improvisation, used stock characters and farce situations. It became so popular that it was acted in Rome by amateurs--respectable young men.[6] The Saturae are thought to have been vaudeville

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[1] J. Wight Duff, A Literary History of Rome (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), p. 80.

[2] Ibid., p. 83.

[3] Ibid., p. 82.

[4] Ibid., p. 222.

[5] Ibid., p. 80.

[6] Ibid., p. 83.

sketches, largely improvised. The name, apparently, is derived from the satura lanx,[1] the full platter of first fruits offered to Ceres and Bacchus, and suggests a medley. There was dialogue, but little or no plot.[2] The Mimus, however, though bawdy in character, appears to have been a true dramatic production.

It is important to note that both the Mimus and the Fabula Atellana were competitors with Plautine Comedy, and, indeed, outlived the Fabula Palliata.[3] It is equally significant for the understanding of the theatrical atmosphere of the day that all the above expressions of the "native" Italian tradition were characterized by obscenity, broad humour, farce situations, liveliness and a sort of irreverent indecency. One of them, the Fabula Atellana, as has been noted, also made use of stock characters.

The introduction of Graeco-Roman literature during the time of Livius Andronicus tended to overshadow the "native" Italian comedy.[4] Thus, before Plautus, the first great writer of Graeco-Roman Comedy, based on Greek New Comedy (νέα), Naevius, had made the Romans familiar with this new type of production with its stock plots and characters.[5]

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[1] Ibid., p. 81.

[2] Ibid., p. 82.

[3] Ibid., p. 222.

[4] Ibid., p. 121.

[5] Ibid., p. 130

It is true that, beginning with Naevius, this Graeco-Roman Comedy, the Fabula Palliata, depended heavily on its source, νέα. But Naevius himself began the practice of contaminatio,[1] and seems to have adapted his Greek plays to suit his Roman audience.[2]

Plautus followed the practices of his predecessor. It is probable, though we cannot be certain of this, that, even more than Naevius, he introduced Roman elements into his adaptations of Greek New Comedy.[3] Furthermore it appears likely that he was influenced by the tradition of the "native" Italian comedy. To this tradition may be assigned the sketchiness of some of his plots, and what Taladoire calls "plaisanteries de mauvais goût."[4] From this same tradition may come the use of music. Duff suggests that the pauses in action may have been filled with simple flute melodies, and that songs were used throughout the plays.[5] These songs, however, instead of being given to the chorus, as in Old Comedy, are provided for individual actors.[6]

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[1] Ibid., p. 131.

[2] Ibid., p. 127 ff.

[3] Ibid., p. 172 ff.

[4] Barthélémy A. Taladoire, Essai sur le comique de Plaute (Monaco: Les Éditions de l'Imprimerie de Monaco, 1956), p. 173.

[5] Duff, op. cit., p. 197.

[6] Helen Hull Law, Studies in the Songs of Plautine Comedy (Menasha: George Banta Publishing Company, 1922). (Doctoral Thesis University of Chicago), p. 107.

This use of music throughout the plays was one of the reasons for Plautus' great popularity in his own day.[1]

Also to the "native" Italian tradition may be assigned the broad farce of Plautus, the horseplay, the tricks of all kinds--to which his audience was accustomed. The "native" Italian tradition was therefore, in one way, a hindrance to Plautus, in that it influenced him toward sketchiness, broad farce situations, and crudity. Doubtless, it also enriched his plays. Other factors, moreover, as will be shown later, influenced this aspect of Plautus' plays. But before these factors are considered, it is useful to assess the difference in the theatrical atmosphere in which Molière, the first French writer of comedy, moved.

For Molière, there was the literature of the ancient world, there was old French comedy and there was Italian comedy in which to delve. All were within his grasp.[2] His first comedies were one-act farces like those of the Italian theatre, borrowed, in concept at least, from the Commedia Dell'Arte.[3] This type of comedy resembled quite closely the "native" Italian comedy mentioned above. The most important contribution of this comedy to Molière's writing was to influence the mouvement of his theatre. Dramatic action seems not to have been natural to the French theatre of the day which was inclined to be

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[1] The Complete Roman Drama, ed. George E. Duckworth (New York: Random House, 1942), VI, p. XXV.

[2] Taladoire, op. cit., p. 52.

[3] La Commedia Dell'Arte is popular improvised comedy as opposed to comédie régulière. It displays the talent of the mime and the actor. Like the Fabula Atellana it developed from parades and masquerades at fairs and has four major stock characters: the Capitan, the Docteur, Pantalon, the Zanni.
Louis Moland, Molière et la Comédie Italienne (Paris: Didier et Cie., 1867), p. 9.

discursive.[1] This comedy added action and verve to Molière's work.[2] The Latin comedy, especially the works of Terence and Plautus, provided depth and richness, and the French plays of his predecessors and contemporaries contributed variety.[3] Certainly all of Molière's later works are richer because of the varied tradition with which he could work.[4]

To sum up, both Plautus and Molière were influenced by the dramatic traditions which they inherited. In the case of Plautus, as has been seen, this tradition was partly composed of "native" Italian comedy, and partly of the Graeco-Roman Comedy as exemplified by Naevius, and depending heavily on the Hellenistic νέα.

Molière had a longer and more varied tradition, as has been noted, from which to derive certain elements in his comedy. This more varied tradition explains some of the changes he made in the plays of Plautus under consideration. Thus, in the Prologue to the Amphitryon he uses dialogue, not soliloquy, to gain the attention of the audience, and makes the Prologue part of the play, since in it Mercury asks Night to stay longer in order to lengthen the night for Jupiter. In this way the Prologue is made organic. This shows a technical advance on the part of Molière, probably due to the larger theatrical tradition. A wife is invented for Sosie, to provide a contrast between noble and plebeian love and to give more opportunity for slapstick. In this way,

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[1] Ibid., p. 5.

[2] Ibid., p. 4.

[3] Taladoire, op. cit., p. 52.

[4] Ibid., p. 53.

the comedy is made more complicated. For these same reasons, extra characters are added in L'Avare. Extra opportunities for fun are provided with the addition of the servants; a more complicated plot results from the additional pair of lovers. Other changes possibly show half-reflections of other authors--the usurer's list, the welcoming of Mariane by Cléante in his father's name, the false reconciliation between father and son brought about by Maître Jacques--even, perhaps, the change in character of the miser. Certainly the tradition of romantic love as seen in L'Avare has very little to do with the tradition of love in Menander, which was taken over by Plautus, and which often began the love affair with a violation.[1]

Some of the above mentioned changes may also have been influenced, as will be seen later, by the type of audience for which Molière wrote, since theatrical tradition is likely to be interlocked with the type of audience for which plays are presented. One or two of them, as for instance, the changes made in the Prologue of the Amphitryon, may also have been influenced by the differences in the actual production of the plays under consideration. The differences in production, however, may also have contributed to some of the other changes made by Molière.

To the modern theatre-goer, the most striking feature of the Plautine theatre would be what might be termed the costly impermanence of the theatrical productions. Thus, in the big cities of today there

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[1] It is important to realize that the assumptions of New Comedy were not taken from Attic domestic life. "Rape, exposure and recognition were taken over from tragedy...." Korte, op. cit., p. 22.

are perhaps a dozen theatres offering different long-run plays. To these are to be added the motion pictures, amateur theatrical productions, and television plays. Theatre in one form or another is a nightly entertainment. In Rome, at the time of which we are speaking, there was no permanent theatre. In the provinces, yes. But in Rome, the first permanent theatre was built by Pompey in 55 B.C. as a temple to Venus. Before this time, wooden theatres were built, and taken down after use. Likewise, the theatre was open only on festival days, for drama was very closely connected with religion, and, originally, was presented close to the temple of a god honoured in the festival.[1] The number of days available for stage productions in 200 B.C. varied from five to ten for the whole year, although by the time of Augustus, it had increased to about forty.[2]

The plays written for these festivals were to be produced only once. Sometimes the games were repeated by popular demand or for religious reasons. Thus, in 205 B.C. the ludi plebeii were performed an additional seven times--perhaps because of the Miles Gloriosus, which was a great success.[3] Usually, however, they were performed only once during this period. There was a competition to see whose play would be chosen for production; then the play would be purchased. Furthermore there were no royalties beyond the purchase price, for there were no revivals, nor was there a reading public for the plays. The state and the aediles paid for the cost of the production.

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[1] Ibid., p. 157.

[2] Duckworth, op. cit., p. XXI.

[3] Ibid.

To repeat, to the modern theatre-goer the most striking feature about this system is its costly impermanence. Thus, the theatre is put up, and taken down; a play is produced only once; there is no reading public of any size. Naturally, Plautus would be affected by the system for which he was writing. His play had to amuse a large audience in a holiday mood. Doubtless the aediles would make their choice accordingly. The play, therefore, had to be funny, bawdy and neither deep nor serious except on well worn themes.

It did not matter if the characterization, as in the Aulularia, did not remain constant,[1] or if the situations were wildly improbable[2] or if there were sloppy scenes and unpolished areas.[3] For one showing, a broad outline would be sufficient--and the funnier, the better.

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[1] This criticism has been applied to the character of the miser in the Aulularia as the result of the attempt to complete the play by Codrus of Bologna in the Beroaldus edition in which Euclio is so delighted at recovering his treasure that he gives it spontaneously along with his daughter to Lyconides, and the slave who had stolen it remarks to the spectators that Euclio has changed his nature. There has been much discussion as to whether this was what Plautus intended.
~~S.V.~~, Thomas, op. cit., pp. VII, VIII.

[2] An example of an improbable situation from the Amphitruo would be the birth of twins to Alcumena the day after the night of passion with Jupiter.
~~S.V.~~, Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, lines 1087-1146.

[3] The frequent repetitions and notices of action in the Amphitruo give rise to this criticism. For example, Mercury in the Prologue explains the plot. He repeats parts of it in Act I, Scene II, Jupiter repeats parts of the plot in Act III, Scene I, and again in Act III, Scene III. Finally it is Mercury's turn in Act III, Scene IV.
~~S.V.~~, ibid., lines 1-152; lines 463-498; lines 861-881; lines 973-983; lines 984 to 1008.

Simple, coarse, different, amusing--these must have been the standards at which Plautus aimed. He wrote busily. Some one hundred and thirty plays were claimed to be Plautine, twenty-one of which are extant, more or less complete, and are judged genuine.[1] In all of them are found, as in the Aulularia and the Amphitruo, "...imperfectly constructed plots, extravagant and irrelevant episodes, the provoking tautologies, the teasing postponements of a piece of news, the unfettered anachronisms ...robust strength and rollicking humour."[2] For his purposes, for the theatre for which Plautus was working, this last was enough.

For Molière this type of writing would not have done. In his day Paris rejoiced in quite a highly advanced theatrical world. When Molière returned to Paris after his sojourn in the provinces, it was to a city which contained, besides the tangle of jugglers, sword swallowers and montebanks, which every big city possessed, two well-known companies, each acting in its own theatre. These were the troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and the Italians, the troupe of Bianchi, which possessed as its leading actor Tiberio Fiorello from whom Molière learned so much.[3] This last troupe was comfortably installed at the Petit-Bourbon. Through the good graces of Monsieur,[4]

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[1] Duff, op. cit., p. 163.

[2] Ibid., pp. 213-4.

[3] "Il [Fiorello] fut le maistre de Molière
Et la nature fut le sien."
~~S.V.~~, D. B. Lewis Wyndham, The Comic Mask (New York: Conward McMann, Inc., 1939), p. 23.

[4] The brother of Louis XIV. ~~S.V.~~, André Maurois, A History of France (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1960), p. 217.

the troupe of Molière was permitted to share the Petit-Bourbon with the Italians, using the off-days.[1] The troupe, however, found it necessary to build up its own public, a rather difficult task, for the theatre-going clientele was already well-divided between the theatres. Thus Molière, as opposed to Plautus, was writing for an organized, competitive theatre system. If the customer did not like the plays of Molière, he could patronize another group. The audience, as a result of this system, was much better versed in playgoing, and much more discriminating than that of Plautus. It was necessary to write more carefully, to avoid untidy plots, endless repetition and carelessness. No longer, for example, could Jupiter appear frequently to tell what was going to happen, as in the Amphitruo, nor could Mercury, in the same play, repeat what had happened and what was going to happen. Characterization had to be firm.

The miser in the Aulularia could conceivably in Codrus of Bologna's completion of the play[2] reform and give the money to his daughter. In L'Avare he had to clutch it to himself. Impossible situations had to be avoided, or solved by a cliché, as in the ending of L'Avare. Since tragedy was à la mode, and the Italians were showing the mime, Molière's comedies had to be extremely funny, and yet restrained enough to be classed as drama. His style had to be polished, his language sparkling.

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[1] Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.
~~B.V.~~, Nine Classic French Plays; ea. Joseph Seronde and Henri Peyre (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1936), p. 27.

[2] ~~Vide~~, note I, page 24.

As an example, one might consider here the differences in the prologues to the Amphitruo and the Amphitryon.[1] Plautus' prologue sets the tone of his play--it is to be rough humour. Mercury speaks to the audience, begs them to be quiet, explains the plot, helps them to differentiate, by means of the two tassels, between the Amphitryons and the Sosias. Molière's prologue is very different. He excites interest by the use of machinery--brings Night in on her cloud, provides for a dialogue by using Mercury as a partner and gives the prerequisites in conversation. He is writing his play more carefully, for it is to be shown again and again, and is to be printed and to be read.

Similarly in the two plays about the miser, one notices in Molière a higher level of plot construction. The Latin play is a series of amusing incidents attached to a central character; the French play has three plot lines which are carefully pulled together. These are the love affair of Élise and Valère and that of Cléante and Mariane, both of which are thwarted by the miser until the end of the play. To these two plot lines is added the miser's love for his gold--and for Mariane. All of these elements are carefully linked in a sort of cross-plotting.

There are also improvements in the characterization. The miser, Harpagon, is a much more well-rounded character than the miser of Plautus. The reactions of Harpagon are shown in several different situations. He is seen with his daughter, with his son, with various servants, with his love, Mariane, with the go-between and with the

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[1] These prologues have already been considered with reference to changes made as a result of theatre tradition.
Vide, page 21.

usurer. His actions are always consistent and the characterization grows stronger with each episode. Euclio in the play of Plautus reacts consistently too--but his sole reaction is to dart off to look at his money. Thus, Euclio possesses only one dominating characteristic, a characteristic which is employed by Plautus for comic effect.

The other figures in Molière's play are also strongly delineated. Definite pictures of Élise, Valère and Maître Jacques are projected. In Plautus' play there are really only two living creatures, Euclio and Megadorus. It seems that these changes made by Molière in plot structure and characterization were motivated partially as a result of the organized and competitive theatrical system for which he was working.

CHAPTER III

The Physical Aspect of the Theatre

Up to this point, differences between the plays under consideration which seem to have been caused by differences in theatrical tradition and in the circumstances surrounding the theatrical productions of the two periods have been discussed. Some of these differences seem to have been accentuated by the differences in the actual physical nature of the stage and theatre of the times of Plautus and Molière. In addition, there are some further changes made in Molière's plays which appear to have been due to this same circumstance.

The theatre of the Romans was out-of-doors, built in the shape of the traditional semi-circle. It came from the Greeks, with slight changes in form. Thus, the orchestra instead of being left empty for the chorus was filled with the senators. It has been stated that the earliest theatres had no tiers of seats but merely a semi-circle of sloping soil.[1] The audience would bring seats or recline on the ground. Teuffel, on the other hand, says positively, "...Complete theatres in the Greek style with raised rows of seats all around were erected annually, though still of wood, and in such a manner that the building could be pulled down again after it had served its purpose."[2]

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[1] Charles Thomas Cruttwell, A History of Roman Literature (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 41.

[2] W. S. Teuffel, A History of Roman Literature, trans. Wilhelm Wagner (London: George Bell and Son, 1873), I, p. 125.

Certainly, as Beare points out, there are frequent references to a seated audience in the prologues of Plautus' plays.[1] These comments may, of course, have been carried over from the Greek originals. At any rate, if the audience was standing, or had brought its own camp stools on which to sit, there would be much jostling and pushing to get as close to the stage as possible. If bleachers were supplied, the confusion would be somewhat lessened, but the holiday crowd in the open air might well be restless. Doubtless this restlessness[2] was responsible for many of the repetitions found in Plautus,[3] and for the exciting nature of the plays, filled as they are with fights and beatings.[4]

The stage or pulpitum, close to which the spectator would try to push, was low--no higher than five feet--and narrow, and long. Sometimes it was sixty yards long.[5] This length of stage made nearly believable some of Plautus' favorite devices--for example, the use of asides. An excellent example of this device is found in the Amphitruo,

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[1] W. Beare, "Seats in the Greek and Roman Theatre," Classical Review, Vol. XLIII, (May, 1939), pp. 51-55.

[2] Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, lines 13-15, line 151.

[3] Vick., note 3, p. 24.

[4] Frequent examples of this type of excitement are found both in the Aulularia and the Amphitruo. In the Aulularia, the play begins with Euclio beating the aged Staphyla (Act I, Scene I, lines 39 to 79). Euclio also attacks the cooks (Act III, Scene I, lines 406 to 414) and Strobilius, a slave, (Act IV, Scene IV, lines 628 to 660). In the Amphitruo, Mercury beats Sosia (Act I, lines 370 to 390).

[5] Duff, op. cit., p. 158.

where Sosia and Mercury, both on stage, use asides repeatedly for comic effect.[1]

Another device made more reasonable by the long stage is that of lack of recognition of one character by another. In the Amphitruo once again, Sosia sees Mercury in the form of Sosia. He peers at him for some time before he recognizes himself.[2] It is, of course, night. It is also possible for Amphitruo and Sosia to talk at one side of the stage and Alcumena to speak in front of her house, and neither to see each other until the desired moment.[3] This long narrow stage may well have affected the use of such devices in the plays.

As far as the scenery is concerned, at this period of the Republic it was almost non-existent. What there was was taken, along with the plays, from the Greek New Comedy. There seems to have been a backdrop, the scaena, which usually represented two houses. Between the houses was what is called an angiportum, or alleyway. The exits had significance as to direction, by tradition.

The exit on the left of the actor as he faced the audience led to the forum--as did the angiportum. The other exit led abroad or to the country or to the harbour. In the foreground of the stage was an altar which was excellent for concealment in order to spy on people. It was, for example, used in Act IV of the Aulularia[4] when Strobilius hid there to spy on the houses of Euclio and Megadorus.

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[1] Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, lines 175 ff.

[2] Ibid., lines 292-449.

[3] Ibid., lines 632-660.

[4] Ibid., Aulularia, line 606.

The scaena seems to have been nearly the same for all comedies.[1] It is simple; it does not satisfy the desire for spectacle; it merely gives the imagination something to work on. The attention of the audience was not preoccupied by magnificent scenery; it had to be captured and held by the play. Action, jokes, puns were used--anything to keep the audience interested.

One rather novel idea to fill up this large, sparsely furnished stage was to have characters without speeches standing in knots behind or around the main characters, filling up the corners and reacting to the actors and their speeches with gestures and, possibly, facial expressions. These were what you might call live scenery. There are two fine examples in the plays which we are considering. The first is in the Aulularia, where the attendants, music girls and lambs are on stage, silent for nearly a hundred lines.[2] The second is in the Amphitryon where throughout Act II the slaves who have carried the baggage are on stage, without saying a word, although probably they were showing a considerable by-play throughout Alcumena's speech.[3] Prescott suggests that because the modern student of Roman comedy is usually a reader, not a spectator, frequently "he fails to notice that

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[1] Exceptions are the Asinaria, which required the interior of a room, and the Rudens, which required rocks and a temple. ~~S.V.~~, Duff, op. cit., p. 158.

[2] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act II, Scene IV, lines 280 to 362.

[3] Ibid., Amphitruo, Act II, lines 551 to 854.

the stage is occupied by silent background characters...presumably responsive to the language and actions of the foreground characters and increasing the pictorial and dramatic values of the scene....[1]

Because of the fixed outdoor set, anything which by its nature had to occur inside was described. For example, since it would be rather difficult for Alcumena to give birth outside the house, Bromia has to describe to Amphitruo what has been occurring. In order not to have too much of this sort of description, even taking into account the predeliction of Mediterranean males, past and present, for the out-of-doors, many scenes which should have taken place inside occurred in the street. A typical example of this is in the Aulularia, when Eunomia says to Megadorus,

> ...eo nunc ego secreto ted huc foras seduxi,
> ut tuam rem ego tecum hic loquerer familiarem[2]

Why should she take him out-of-doors in order to speak in more security?

Because the scene was always the same, frequently characters told whence they were coming, and where they were going. Thus, says Euclio, "ibo ad te fretus tua, Fides, fiducia."[3]

Just as the scene was fixed, so there was no employment of a curtain as in our theatre to indicate passage of time. This lack of a curtain intensified the problems already caused by the stage set. "In Plautus' time the play proceeded continuously from the lowering of the curtain

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[1] Henry W. Prescott, "Silent Roles in Roman Comedy," Classical Philology, Volume XXXI, 1932, p. 97.

[2] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act II, Scene I, lines 133-134.

[3] Cf., ibid., Act III, Scene VI, line 586.

at the beginning to the rising at the end, except for short breaks filled with simple music from the tibicen."[1] This meant that the stage had to be filled at all times, and naturally led to the use of the monologue as a time-filler. This device is easily seen in the Aulularia. Euclio frequently darts off stage to check on his glorious pot. Megadorus is left talking to himself whenever the miser hears the chink of the golden coins.[2] These monologues ~~then~~ covered the time for offstage action. In the Amphitruo, for example, while Amphitruo was talking to himself, the birth of the twins and the choking of the serpents took place off stage.[3]

As the fixed scaena insisted upon unity of place, so did the lack of a drop curtain bring about an often uneasy unity of time. For example, in the Amphitruo, it is rather striking to have Jupiter dallying with Alcumena the night before she has her children. Yet obviously, as Duckworth says, "The long night of Jupiter's visit was not, in this case, the night of conception, but a night of love-making."[4] Similarly, Hercules astounds the reader when he stirs from his cradle a few hours after birth to strangle the serpents.[5] For Plautus, however, the matter was very simple. All the events in the play had to occur within twenty-four hours.

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[1] Duff, op. cit., pp. 196, 197.

[2] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act II, Scene II, lines 200 ff.

[3] Ibid., Amphitruo, Act IV, lines 1039 to 1052.

[4] Duckworth, op. cit., p. 6.

[5] Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, Act V, Scene I, lines 1105 ff.

The nature of the early theatres and audiences--as Duff says "...a crowd of jostling noisy spectators...on the slopes above the orchestra"[1]--accounts for the almost desperate efforts to make the plot clear. There seem to have been no programs--billboards, perhaps, but no programs--to help identify the actors. It was, naturally, essential for everybody in the audience to know who the characters were. Attempts at identification were made by the costuming, although these attempts were, of necessity, fairly broad. The dress was modelled on the Greek. Over the tunic was put the pallium, rich or shabby to suit the situation. Colour helped show who the characters were. In general, old men wore white, young men purple, the parasites appeared in grey and were padded to make them look bizarre, soldiers had military costume, country folk appeared in rude attire and slaves in sleeveless tunics. Women--or rather, men dressed as women, since women could not appear on stage until the period of the Roman Empire--were clad in chitons of white or yellow. Furthermore, since this was comedy, all wore sandals. The actors wore wigs, to help in identification. White hair was used for old people, black for young, and red for slaves.

Masks also helped in identification in a large theatre area, although, except for the fixed expression of the mask, they eliminated facial expressions. It has been stated that masks were not used in the time of Plautus and Terence.[2] It cannot be proved that the

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[1] Duff, op. cit., p. 158.

[2] Duff, op. cit., p. 159.

Romans took over the masks as well as the costumes directly from the Greek theatre. Certainly, however, masks were not unknown to the Romans, for they were used at patrician funerals. At any rate, masks would have been very useful to Plautus, especially in his mistaken identity plays such as the Amphitruo. In fact, one wonders if it might not have been very difficult to stage lines 440 ff. of the Amphitruo without masks. Sosia, looking at Mercury, is speaking:

> Certe edepol, quom illum contemplo et formam cognosco meam,
> quem ad modum ego sum--saepe in speculum inspexi--nimis similest mei;
> itidem habet petasum ac vestitum: tam consimilest atque ego;
> sura pes, statura, tonsus, oculi, nasum vel labra,
> malae, mentum, barba, collus: totus....[1]

However, if masks were worn, they would have been used to aid identification, to cut down on the number of actors needed, and to compensate for the size of the immense theatre and the lack of programs. If masks were not used, and even if they were, more positive identification was assured by introducing the characters when they appeared on stage.[2] In this way, one could be almost sure that each spectator knew whom each actor represented.

It seems obvious, therefore, that the plays of Plautus were influenced greatly by the physical aspects of his theatre--the seating arrangements, the long narrow stage, the scenery, the lack of a curtain, and the very size of the theatre. By the time of Molière, this physical plant had changed greatly.

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[1] Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, Act I, Scene I, lines 440 to 445.

[2] One example, from many, will suffice. Megadorus is speaking.
> Ego conveniam Euclionem, si domi est.
> sed eccum video. nescio unde sese homo recipit domum.

~~S.V.~~, ibid., Act II, Scene I, lines 176 to 178.

We are told that the first theatres in Paris were open air theatres.[1] Naturally, the climate of Paris made this none too practical, and it was necessary to find some roofed building. The jeu de paume or roofed tennis court seemed to lend itself to this project. Perhaps to Plautus the theatres so devised would have seemed sumptuous, "decorated with tapestries, lit by flickering candles and with an orchestra of a flute and a drum or 'deux méchants violins de plus.'"[2] To a modern day theatre-goer they seem ill-equipped.

For a more complete description of the French theatre of Molière's day, one may turn to Chapman's The Spirit of Molière.[3] In describing the Palais-Royal theatre, Chapman states that it held three thousand spectators, that the stage had a certain amount of machinery for spectacle plays, and usually about fifty chairs on the stage for spectators. In addition there was a gallery with boxes for the nobility and, under it "an amphitheatre," a graduated series of seats. Directly in front of the stage was the parterre where three hundred spectators stood.[4]

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[1] "La comédie se jouait en plein air comme les danseurs de la foire Saint-Germain."
~~E.V.~~, Eugène Despois, Le Théâtre francais sous Louis XIV (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1894), p. 125.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Percy Addison Chapman, The Spirit of Molière, ed. Jean-Albert Bédé (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 95 ff.

[4] Ibid., p. 95.

A fuller description and a somewhat clearer one is found in Deierkauf-Holsboer's book on the theatre of the Marais.[1] As far as we know, Molière never actually acted in the Marais, but when he renovated his Théâtre de la Croix Noire, the second theatre owned by the Illustre Théâtre, which was the name of Molière's troupe at the beginning of his career,[2] he modelled it on the Marais. A small roofed stage occupied one end of the building. It was fifteen feet wide at the front, and eleven at the back.

On such a stage any involved physical action was difficult. There could not be, as in Plautus' plays, long gallops by running slaves or the device of seeing someone appear at one end of the long stage and discussing him as he approached.[3] Similarly, there was no room for wild horseplay as a character tried to escape a beating.[4] Furthermore,

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[1] S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, Théâtre du Marais (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1954).

[2] Ibid., p. 114.

[3] In Plautus, this device is used by Mercury at the beginning of the Amphitruo. Says Mercury,

"sed Amphitruonis illic est servus Sosia:
a portu illic nunc cum laterna advenit.
abigam iam ego illum advenientem ab aedibus."

Then he watches while Sosia approaches.
~~S.V.~~, Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, Prologue, lines 148-150.
Molière avoids this beginning. Instead, Sosie is on stage and has been speaking for some time when Mercury enters from Amphitryon's house.
~~S.V.~~, Despois, op. cit., Amphitryon, Act I, Scene II, line 260.

[4] A new device with respect to beatings is used by Molière in L'Avare. Valère and Maître Jacques are having a quarrel. First Maître Jacques pushes Valère to the end of the stage; then Valère pushes Maître Jacques to the other side. On a Roman stage this would have taken too long and the action would have been held up. The smaller French stage was excellent for this device.
~~S.V.~~, Despois, op. cit., L'Avare, Act III, Scene II.

when the "two groups unaware of each other" device is used on the French stage, as in L'Avare,[1] one couple stands well forward, and the other at the back of the stage. Likewise, on this sort of stage, there was no room for the silent characters who provided Plautus with living scenery.[2]

Apart from the smallness of the stage, there were other features of the French theatre which influenced Molière's productions. Thus, a winding staircase led from the basement of the theatre to the stage floor, and up to the stage roof. This afforded fairly easy access to the stage. Facing the stage at the other end of the building was the entrance. Around three sides ran the loges, two storeys high. The large expanse in the middle was the parterre. This was standing room, except for a bench running along the sides of the loges, a bench which would permit "à environ quatre-vingts spectateurs trop fatigués par la longue station debout de s'asseoir."[3] Above the second tier of loges was situated the Paradis--what we

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[1] Oeuvres de Molière, op. cit., L'Avare, Act II, Scene II.

[2] In the Amphitryon, Molière has Amphitryon and Sosie enter unescorted; Plautus, in the same scene has them arrive with slaves and baggage.
~~S.V.~~, Despois, op. cit., Amphitryon, Act II, Scene I, lines 689 ff.
~~S.V.~~, Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, Act II, Scene I, lines 551 ff.

[3] S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, Le Théâtre du Marais (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1954), p. 112.

call "the gods" today--outfitted with benches. Over the entrance was a bleacher known as the amphitheatre.

Certainly these seating arrangements do not appear to be ideal. The benches were hard. From most of the seats it was very difficult to see without craning one's neck at a most unpleasant angle. The crowd standing in the parterre had difficulty seeing over the stage floor. Those in the paradis often found themselves looking at the roof of the stage. The only really good seats in the house were those in the loges facing directly on stage. Still, to the audience itself, says Saintsbury, "...le théâtre était déjà d'une magnificence inouie aux yeux des contemparains émerveillés."[1] And there were two important advantages as compared to the theatre of Plautus. First, Molière was performing in a permanent building--a fact which might well have had a steadying effect upon the audience. Secondly, a good part of the audience would be seated in predetermined seats. The rest had the choice of being seated. Once again, this factor of seating might well have steadied the audience. Certainly Molière found no need, as did Plautus, of quieting his audience by cajoling them, or appealing to them in his prologues.[2] Perhaps predetermined seats

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[1] The Plays of Molière, ed. George Saintsbury (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1907), I, p. XVIII.

[2] "haec ut me voltis ad probare adniter,
ita huic facietis fabulae silentium
itaque aequi et iusti hic eritis omnes arbitri."
and again
"adeste: erit operae pretium hic spectantibus
Iovem et Mercurium facere histrioniam"
~~S.V.~~, Plautus, op. cit., Amphitryon, Prologus, lines 13-15, lines 151, 152.

in a permanent building helped produce a more orderly audience.

The theatre had no provision for heating or air conditioning. Still, it was probably as comfortable as sitting unprotected from the sun except by a canopy. Lighting was a problem, for the plays usually began at four or five in the afternoon, after vespers. The solution was candles stuck in sconces in the walls, or in rough cross-shaped chandeliers. This was one problem avoided by the Romans, who showed their plays in daylight. On the whole, however, the physical plant of the jeu de paume would seem to have been more comfortable for the spectators, who would thus be more attentive than their Roman counterparts.

There was one more place where the audience could sit--and where they could cause more trouble than throughout the rest of the theatre. This was on the sides of the stage itself. Young bloods who wanted to be seen would take their places on the chairs along the two sides of the stage. Says Despois: "...pour un écu ou un demi-louis on est sur le théâtre; mais cela gâte tout, et il ne faut quelquefois qu'un insolent pour tout troubler."[1] Molière created a character in Les Fâcheux who drew his chair out on the middle of the stage, sat himself down on it, and presented a large derrière to the audience.

Measures were taken to stop this nuisance. When the Théâtre du Marais was rebuilt, the stage was raised and no steps led down to the parterre. The only result was to prevent those standing in the parterre from seeing over the stage floor. In 1703 the king ordered

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[1] Despois, Le Théâtre français sous Louis XIV, op. cit., p. 116.

that the spectators be cut off from the stage by a balustrade.[1] The custom of seating spectators on the stage itself, however, did not cease until 1759. The difficulties caused can be imagined. Players were tripped and molested, attention was taken from the play, and actual sword fights occurred from time to time. Naturally, the already small stage was made smaller.

One of the most striking results of this "habitude si gênante"[2] was the effect upon the scenery. "Ce singulier usage que ne cessa pas qu'en 1759 rendait impossible les changements de décoration, gênait tous les mouvements de scène...."[3] Since the stage was so very small, there was very little regular scenery, and very few properties, these being of the simplest description. From a manuscript describing the mise en scène of the plays of Molière from 1673 to 1684, that is, just after the death of Molière, we find the following for L'Avare:

> "Le théâtre est une salle et sur le derrière un jardin. Il faut deux chiquenilles (souquenilles), des lunettes, un balai, une batte, une cassette, une table, une chaise,

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[1] Ibid., p. 123.

[2] Deierkauf-Holsboer, op. cit., p. 114.

[3] Despois, Le Théâtre français sous Louis XIV, p. 115.

une écritoire, du papier, une robe, deux flambeaux sur la table au cinquième acte."[1]

This cannot be called an over-dressed stage. For the Amphitryon, which was a machine play, and thus more lavishly furnished, we have this description given:[2]

"Le théâtre est une place de ville. Il faut un balcon, dessous une porte; pour le Prologue, une machine pour Mercure, un char pour la Nuit. Au troisième acte, Mercure s'en retourne, et Jupiter sur son char. Il faut une lanterne sourde, une batte."[3]

The scenery used was, then, obviously very simple. This was one result of the seats on the stage. There was a curtain--usually a sweeping one of tapestry, but it was not used except on spectacle or machine days. Moreover on those days, spectators were forbidden the stage, in order to leave more room for the machinery.

Molière, like Plautus, was bound by the tradition of unity of time, which insisted that all dramatic action must occur within twenty-four hours. He did, however, manage to lighten the unity of place problem by using a stage set depicting two or more places. Thus,

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[1] Ibid., p. 415.

[2] A machine play was one which used machines to create striking effects. The Amphitryon made use of machines three times. First, in the Prologue where Mercury is on a cloud and Night is drawn through the air by two horses; second, Mercury flies up to heaven; third, Jupiter appears in a cloud on his eagle. ~~S.V.~~, Despois, Oeuvres de Molière, op. cit., Amphitruo, Prologue, line 1; Act III, Scene X, line 1885; Act III, Scene XI, line 1890.

[3] Despois, Le Théâtre français sous Louis XIV, op. cit., p. 415.

as shown above in the stage set for L'Avare, the front of the stage represented the house; the back, the garden. Sometimes the scenery had three compartments: the centre one a house, garden or forest; the two side ones houses.[1] By this means, action taking place in different locales could be shown. The stage sets were carefully saved from play to play. Indeed, even great spectacles made use of old decors and old machines. One of Molière's plays, Psyche, was actually written to make use of a magnificent enfer set which Louis XIV found among his properties.

By his stage settings Molière managed to vary his unity of place. He preferred dialogue to the soliloquy used by Plautus, considering it more interesting and dramatic. Also, it was better suited to his stage because, as has been noted, Molière's stage did not lend itself to soliloquies. He increased the number of actors and used dialogue to cover off-stage action, or passage of time; an example may be found in the Amphitryon. A new character has been invented, Cléanthis. She acted as foil for Sosie, and increased his part, one which, incidentally, Molière himself acted. This permitted dialogue, not soliloquy, in certain parts of the Amphitryon.[2] The same device was used in L'Avare, where many new characters were added, and, as a result,

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[1] Nine Classic French Plays, ed., Joseph Seronde and Henri Peyre (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1936), p. 15.

[2] Despois, Oeuvres de Molière, op. cit., Amphitryon, Act II, Scene III, lines 1069 to 1197.

the miser had very few opportunities to speak to himself.

The theatre of the period made up for rather uninspired stage sets by using magnificent costumes. No extravagance was spared. "Satin and velvet and gold figured largely, while many of the most famous pieces positively necessitated exemplifications of the elaborate fashions of the day."[1] No one worried about exactitude. Thus, the Greeks, and anyone of antiquity, appeared in the Roman toga. Each actor bought his own costume--a heavy expense--and wore it time and time again. "On ne songeait qu'à le rendre aussi somptueux que possible."[2] It was fairly simple then, once you had a character firmly fixed in your mind, to identify him later in the play. Likewise, the theatre was fairly small, so that one could see quite clearly. Because of this, masks were worn very rarely.

Programs were not printed. There were, however, affiches giving a general description of the plot, and there were publications which discussed the theatre. Moreover, the same company played night after night, and revived its plays from time to time, so that regular theatre-goers would soon learn to recognize the actors, and perhaps

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[1] The Plays of Molière, ed. Saintsbury, op. cit., p. XVIII.

[2] Despois, Le Théâtre français sous Louis XIV, op. cit., p. 133.

to know the plays. In spite of these aids, however, Molière often found it necessary to introduce each character.[1]

In the ways suggested above, the work of both Molière and Plautus was greatly influenced by the differing traditions of their respective theatres, and the limitations of their physical plants. Some of the changes which Molière made in Plautus' work were, as has already been indicated in this chapter, direct results of the differences between the two traditions and the two theatres. Thus, we find a higher level of plot construction and characterization in the Amphitryon and L'Avare of Molière than in the Plautine originals. This development is probably traceable to the more varied tradition of the French theatre and to its organized and competitive nature. Because of the permanent building and the seating arrangements, the audience seems to have been somewhat more attentive. The costuming, the use of posters to make audiences more familiar with the plays and actors, and the smaller size of the theatre also helped to keep the audience

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[1] Two examples from the Amphitryon might be given. In the first, Mercury is speaking.

"Mais je vois Jupiter qui fort civilement
Renconduit l'amoureuse Alcmène."

~~S.v.~~, Despois, op. cit., Amphitryon, Act I, Scene II, lines 528-529.

Later it is Amphitryon who says,

"Entrons sans davantage attendre
Mais Alcmène paroit avec tous ses appas
En ce moment, sans doute, elle ne m'attend pas."

~~S.v.~~, ibid., Act II, Scene I, lines 842 to 846.

more interested. Since the audience was more attentive, Molière was able to reduce the repetitions which characterize Plautus' plays. Finally, the size of the stage and its shape made it impossible for Molière to use some of Plautus' favorite tricks, tricks dependent on a large stage. The scenery was also affected by the size of the stage in use. This, in turn could not help but affect the plot.

The traditions and the physical plant of the French theatre, therefore, do much to explain the changes made by Molière in the plays of Plautus. Even more important deviations can be found, however, which resulted from the differences in society, since, naturally, each man tried to present what his audience wanted to see, and what he himself saw about him.

CHAPTER IV

The Society

To understand the plays of either Plautus or Molière, it is necessary to consider carefully the general type of audience for which each playwright wrote. The plays of Plautus were presented between the years 224 to 184 B.C. During that time the Romans fought the exhausting war against Hannibal, and, after 200 B.C., were pitch-forked into the conquest of the East. Although Greek influence--and this means Hellenistic Greek influence--with cultural impacts[1] had flooded into Rome since the capture of Tarentum, and although the disintegrating tendencies of the Hannibalic war had begun to operate,[2] the old Roman character had not as yet been pervasively corrupted by eastern influences.

That character, in its ideal form, was marked by gravitas, dignitas, simplicitas, and pietas. It is difficult to translate these words into direct English equivalents, but one may say that the ideal Roman was cast somewhat in the mold of Cato the Elder. He despised the levitas of the Greeks. He was suspicious of intellectualism and of things artistic in general. There was a strong streak of Puritanism in him, and a bigotry and narrowness which often went hand in hand with a generous measure of hypocrisy.

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[1] Duff, op. cit., p. 100 ff.

[2] Ibid., p. 95 ff.

Yet one must remember that by the time of Plautus there had also developed a strong Phil-hellenic element as illustrated in the circle around Scipio the Younger. To this circle, indeed, the Fabulae Palliatae of Terence are assigned,[1] and though these were of a later date, the Phil-hellenic sentiment had been gaining ground since the time of Livius Andronicus.

There is another factor to consider. The Romans might be suspicious of intellectualism. But their gravitas had moments of relaxation in which a rough crude humour, with nothing subtle about it, was permitted. How else can one explain the Versus Fescennini, or the popularity of the Fabulae Atellanae? It would seem that the citizens of Rome, the senators, the knights and the city mob, for which Plautus was composing, while it was not cultured enough or intellectual enough to appreciate anything but broad humour, was ready to be amused in a somewhat crude way, and would even permit a considerable licence. How else is one to explain Roman pietas permitting the satire on Jupiter and Mercury so evident in the Amphitruo?

But there were also areas into which it was dangerous for a playwright of the period to venture. One was politics, as Naevius discovered to his sorrow,[2] and, in general, anything which seemed to criticize the state, or the Roman way of life had to be avoided.

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[1] Ibid., p. 204.

[2] Ibid., p. 127 ff.

The Roman playwrights did not have the same freedom of speech as the Greeks enjoyed.

Thus, if we are to attempt to describe the sort of audience for which Plautus composed his plays, we must visualize a crowd composed largely of plebeians, but sprinkled with senators and knights. Anyone except slaves was permitted to attend the plays free of charge. Even women and children were admitted, since these plays celebrated religious festivals. In practice, however, unmarried girls, like the Athenian girls of an earlier period, were kept in seclusion, and respectable Roman matrons, like their Greek counterparts, spent most of their time in the house.

In general, then, Plautus had before him an audience incapable of appreciating subtleties, but ready for rough fun, horse-play, and broad, coarse humour. Beare says, "...his [Plautus'] coarseness is the hearty laughter of Italian peasantry."[1] The patricians must not be offended. "Plautus had to use tact to avoid offending the patrician powers."[2] Roman morals must not be ridiculed. But, since the plays were ostensibly Greek, the Romans could laugh at actions of the Greeklings which were not permitted to themselves, and retain their sense of national superiority. Thus, a Roman audience might have been affronted if a Roman slave were represented

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[1] W. Beare, "Plautus and his Public," Classical Review, XLII (July 28, 1928), p. 109.

[2] Wilton Wallace Blanke, "The Dramatic Values in Plautus" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1918), p. 2.

as making as free with his master as the cook does in the Aulularia when he calls Euclio "stolide."[1] But, because the play was set in Athens, this attitude was acceptable.

This audience, predominantly male, was composed of all types of people, for their was no choice of plays to which they might go. Sometimes, as Terence complains in the Hecyra, the audience left for the seductions of rope-dancing, boxing and gladiatorial fights.[2] Ordinarily, however, a public which in the modern era would frequent different types of theatres according to its taste, was found in one place. The public was apparently anything but genteel: there were factions for and against the author, fights, hissing and applause. Thus the play had to appeal to the basic elements in man to be at all successful. The public was not sophisticated with reference to play-going, for there was no continuous season at which they might, by repeated attendance, develop a strong dramatic sense. However, Hough does suggest the following:

> "As time proceeded, Plautus offered to the public plays in which the plot and intrigue were made a little more matters of surprise; the explanation of the trick given once or not at all; the text is relieved of laborious repetitions and rehearsals by allowing the plot to develop of itself, and the acting to provide the clarity of the intrigue."[3]

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[1] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act III, Scene II, line 415.

[2] Duff, op. cit., p. 207.

[3] John N. Hough, "The Understanding of Intrigue," American Journal of Philology, LX (October, 1939), p. 423.

This is, of course, pure supposition, since we are not sure of all the dates on which the various plays were given. We are certain, however, of one thing: the audience was not an easy one to handle. Taladoire comments on this fact when he states that one of the most striking aspects in the Prologue is to note the attempt to gain the "attention bienveillante du spectateur" and continues to say that this suggests a public very difficult to please.[1]

It is interesting to consider how this type of audience affected Plautus' adaptation of his Greek originals. This is difficult to answer, since we do not have the Greek plays from which he borrowed. But it is possible to draw inferences from the plays themselves.

First and foremost, as has been suggested, one may infer the difficulty of holding the attention of the audience from the prologues of Plautus. Thus the prologues of both the Amphitruo and the Aulularia attempt to catch the attention of the audience by giving summaries of the plots.[2] They also contain puns and rough humour.[3]

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[1] Taladoire, op. cit., p. 30.

[2] "The prologues bring his audience before us--an audience which must be told to keep quiet during the performance, must be bantered into good humour, and must be pointedly instructed in the outline of the plot."
Duff, op. cit., p. 175.

[3] Ibid., p. 188 ff.

The necessity of holding his audience also led to Plautus repeating summaries of the plot, and suggesting the action to come.[1] Above all, Plautus had to keep his plays fast-moving and interesting.

It seems to have been for this reason that he introduced the cantica, since the cantica broke the monotony of the spoken parts of the play and especially the soliloquies.[2]

These cantica were sung by the actors, and became an integral part of the plays. They added a touch of musical comedy and produced the same effect as is found in today's musical comedy. As Helen Hull Law suggests, these songs "enhance the force of emotion, heighten the atmosphere of frivolity and vary the manner of delivery."[3] They were doubtless just what was needed to catch the interest of restless spectators, and they seem to have been used at high points in the action. Often, indeed, the cantica were accompanied by dancing.

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[1] Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, Prologue, lines 1-152; Act III, Scene I, lines 860-881; Act III, Scene IV, lines 984-1008.

[2] "Plautus a créé un genre de comédie où l'élement musical l'emporte sur le parlé, riche en mètre varié, et en chansons de toutes sortes, melés parfois de danses." ~~S.V.~~, Taladoire, op. cit., p. 77.
For an example in Plautus, S.V., Amphitruo, Act I, Scene I, lines 161 ff. Cf. Duff, op. cit., pp. 195-197.

[3] Helen Hull Law, op. cit., p. 106.

Another method which Plautus used to keep his plays interesting was to make the speech of his actors as vivid as possible. He used the colloquial speech of the Romans and enriched it with puns, word play, verbal jests and words made up for the occasion. His language is filled with assonance and alliteration, rich in grotesque compounds and racy. "In the invention of new words and the fertility of compounds, he [Plautus] reminds us of Shakespear."[1] Examples in quantity can be given. In the Aulularia, "uerberabilissume,"[2] in the Amphitruo,

> "Mirum ni hic me quasi murenam exossare cogitat.
> Ultro istunc qui exossat homines...."[3]

are but two examples of the richness of his language. Duff goes so far as to say,

> "...his most lasting title to fame lies in the virile spontaneity animating his exuberance of expression."[4]

Aelius Stilo, writing at a time more close to that of Plautus was even more enthusiastic. He declared that the Muses, if they had spoken Latin, would have used the Latin of Plautus.[5]

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[1] Cruttwell, op. cit., p. 47.

[2] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act IV, Scene IV, line 633.

[3] Ibid., Amphitruo, Act I, Scene I, line 319, 320.

[4] Duff, op. cit., p. 200.

[5] W. M. Lindsay, Syntax of Plautus (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), p. 42.

Plautus tried yet another trick to gain the favourable attention of his audience. He tried to make the audience participate directly in his action. "Plaute confond volontiers les deux mondes, celui de la scène et celui de la vie."[1] He invites, so to speak, the spectators to the stage. "In Plautus...the audience is an integral part of the play, a group of privileged eavesdroppers...whom the characters often even address."[2] A striking example of this technique is found in the Aulularia, when Euclio implores the audience to tell him where his pot of gold is and, changing his mood, even accuses them of having stolen it.[3] Plautus does not mind violating the illusion of the theatre if he can establish the actors on terms of intimacy with their public.

Plautus was challenged by what seem for various reasons to have been difficult audiences. By various techniques he held and amused them. "And by his success he brought the common folk of Rome into closer touch with genuine drama than they had ever been before, or were ever to be again."[4]

It may be interesting, for point of comparison with the French, to consider the apparent attitude, as seen in Plautine comedy, of the Romans toward love and religion. We have briefly mentioned the role

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[1] Taladoire, op. cit., p. 170.

[2] Charles Henry Buck, A Chronology of the Plays of Plautus (Baltimore: John Hopkins' Press, 1940), p. 29.

[3] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act IV, Scene IX, lines 712 ff.

[4] Beare, Plautus and His Public, op. cit., p. 111.

of woman in Roman society. Until the dying days of the Republic, she was the matron. Her duty was to bear children and to organize the household. She was property, not a companion or a lover. It was the custom to mock marriage and women in Greek New Comedy, and this is what Megadorus is doing in Act III of the Aulularia.[1] On the other hand, in the Amphitruo we find Alcumena to be a most interesting and strong character.[2] A strong picture of married love results. Thus, even in her anger, Alcumena says hastily, "A, propitius sit potius" when Jupiter invokes his own curse upon Amphitruo.[3] Amphitruo, in turn, rejoices at the news of the easy birth of the twins.[4] However, when Alcumena is pushed too far, she reacts with the stern pride and self-esteem of a Roman matron.[5]

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[1] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act III, Scene V, lines 473 ff.

[2] Duff, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

[3] Lindsay, Amphitruo, op. cit., Act III, Scene II, line 935.

[4] "Iam istuc gaudeo utut me erga merita est."
~~S.V.~~, ibid., Act V, Scene I, lines 1100-1101.

[5] Alc.: "Ualeas, tibi habeas res tuas, reddas meas.
iuben mi ire comites?
Jup.: Sanan es?
Alc.: Si non iubes,
ibo egomet; comitem mihi Pudicitiam duxero."
~~S.V.~~, ibid., Act III, Scene II, lines 928-930.

This portrait of a woman and of love is very different from the usual depiction of love in Greek New Comedy where "love is that emotion which causes a man to forget for the time being how many minas there are in a talent."[1] It would seem that this Plautine portrait might be a Roman addition, and an addition showing some deep feeling for married love. Says Palmer, "Neither Molière nor Dryden arrived at the conception of the loving husband and faithful wife which Plautus places before us."[2]

On the other hand, while we are mentioning the tenderness shown Alcumena by Amphitruo, we must remember that the Aulularia makes the violation of a free born girl a central part of the plot, and shows no consideration for the girl's feelings whatsoever. Apparently little about women except their fidelity seemed important to a Roman audience.

The Amphitruo seems to have been one of Plautus' most successful comedies and is unique among his plays. It is the only example of a mythological travesty that has survived from Roman comedy. Since it is a play about the gods, and the gods at their least noble, it is interesting to consider the Roman reaction toward their state religion. This play would have been first written to be shown at a festival in honour of the gods. It is true that the cadre is Greek, but the gods are basically the same. Certainly Jupiter and Mercury are not represented as god-like. Taladoire suggests that Plautus wanted to

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[1] Beare, Plautus and His Public, op. cit., p. 110.

[2] The Amphitruo of Plautus, ed. Palmer, op. cit., p. XVII.

add to the comedy by making Jupiter and Mercury simple men.[1] They do not seem simple and ordinary. In fact Jupiter is shown as an unclean trickster, and Mercury as a cruel practical joker. Imagine these characteristics being given to Jesus Christ and St. Peter. One doubts that the production would be permitted. However, within the play, there is some reaction which shows a slight reverence. In the Prologue, a few lines indicate religious feeling.[2] Again, when Amphitruo learns the explanation of the trick, his reaction is not anger, but almost pride.[3]

Finally, at the end of the play, after listening reverently to Jupiter he says,

"Faciam ita ut iubes et te oro, promissa ut serues tua."[4]

and goes in to visit his wife.

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[1] Taladoire, op. cit., p. 88.

[2] "Pater huc me misit ad uos oratum meus
tam etsi, pro imperio uobis quod dictum foret
scribat facturos, quippe qui intellexerat
uereri uos se et metuere, ita ut aequom est Iouem."
~~S.V.~~, Lindsay, op. cit., Amphitruo, Prologue, line 20 ff.

[3] "Pol me hau paenitet,
si licet boni dimidium mihi diuidere cum Joue.
Abi domum, iube uasa pura actutum adornari mihi
ut Jouis supremi multis hostiis pacem expetam."
~~S.V.~~, ibid., lines 1124 ff.

[4] Ibid., line 1144.

It seems obvious that this play could not have shocked the Romans particularly. There is no record of lawsuits or riots following it. Apparently the Romans could accept easily fun being made of their gods. It would seem to show much more religious tolerance than one could find today, or in the period of Louis XIV, when Molière was writing.

Plautus does not seem to have been a particularly political writer. He was rewriting Greek plays to amuse a Roman audience. Even though he avoided politics and other subjects which might anger the government and cause his plays not to be chosen, to gain interest there had to be a certain amount of Roman commentary. One example is the reference in the Aulularia to the expensive luxuries of women.[1] Buck takes this to refer to the lex Oppia passed in 195 B.C., and would use this to date the play.[2] There are other references which seem to refer to the differences between rich and poor, as in the fable of the ox and the donkey.[3] This type of commentary would surely increase interest and from the paucity of political commentary, one suspects that this was Plautus' only intent in using it.

Plautus, then, in adapting his Greek originals for a Roman audience, does seem to have added Roman elements and to have altered his sources. His changes were chiefly designed to hold the attention of a somewhat rough and uncultured group of spectators, especially since his plays,

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[1] Ibid., Aulularia, Act III, Scene V, lines 505 ff.

[2] Buck, op. cit., p. 36.

[3] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act II, Scene II, lines 226 ff.

unlike those of Terence, were aimed not at a group of intellectuals, but at the average Roman. Yet, in spite of sketchy plots, horseplay and crude humour, his own native exuberance, and possibly his desire to present something better than the theatre which had preceded him, resulted in a comedy which, after many centuries, is still readable and actable.

For his successor, Molière, both the audience and the problems were very different. In these facts may well be the major reasons for the changes Molière made in his Plautine originals.

Molière wrote during France's greatest period, that of Louis XIV. This was the epoch of an absolute monarchy represented by a charming, brilliant man who was fascinated by the theatre. Indeed, Louis XIV himself even enjoyed dancing in ballets. He was, however, also prudent, well-advised, interesting and intelligent. There was no conspiracy of nobles and government against the king, for the Fronde had been crushed, the power of the church was diminishing, and the bourgeoisie was becoming fat, sleek and comfortable. Says Faguet, "...tel est le temps, l'un des très rares où la France a été vraiment heureuse de vivre et qu'elle a désiré qui durasse indéfiniment."[1]

In this sunny seventeenth century, French society began to seek refinement and culture. The absolute monarchy of Louis XIV had created a sort of liberty, a liberty to enjoy the world. Women

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[1] Emile Faguet, En Lisant Molière (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1941), p. 3.

attained a new and lofty position in French society, and began to strive for equal education with men.[1] Their gatherings turned into discussion groups. They interested themselves in Science, Mathematics and, of course, in writing and the theatre.[2]

Unlike the theatre of Plautus, the French theatre was now professional. At the beginning of Molière's career, three theatres served Paris, although "à cette epoque le public désireux de se rendre au spectacle n'était pas assez nombreux pour faire vivre trois salles de théâtre français."[3]

When Molière returned to Paris after his sojourn in the provinces he found practically all the eminent men of letters gathered in the capital. They were writing tragedies for the elite, for a public of connoisseurs, a public who desired an appeal to both their emotions and their intelligence. This particular portion of the public demanded keen psychology, sound plot construction and noble poetry. Molière's work in the provinces had been far from this. He had been playing farces, and watching the audiences enjoy them thoroughly. However, there was another important public in Paris, that of the bourgeoisie. Molière, himself a bourgeois, knew it. He knew that the Parisian bourgeois was attending the plays and enjoying them, particularly those of the Italians. Molière felt that they would also enjoy his comedy.

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[1] Seronde and Peyre, op. cit., p. 25.

[2] Chapman, op. cit., p. 25 ff.

[3] Deierkauf-Holsboer, op. cit., p. 95.

It proved to be so. The Parisian bourgeois, a man of property, honest and attached to his every possession, was not tempted by ideals of honour and chivalry, by exaggerated devotion to women, by loyalty to name. Lofty language coupled with little action did not move him especially. From the beginning the bourgeoisie loved Molière. They loved his theatre enough to stand through the performance, but not enough to pay more than fifteen sols admission. "The bourgeois chose the pit and left the boxes to the quality."[1] Usually the town audience was more than half composed of bourgeois--solid folk, not the very upper crust of the bourgeoisie, the doctors, lawyers and magistrates, for they did not attend the theatre, but the bourgeoisie moyenne. "In them [the bourgeoisie] ...was found that just proportion of unprejudiced feeling and technical knowledge which made of their approval the highest commendation."[2] Molière devised the plays which cost him the most effort for the town public, not for the court.

Be that as it may, no author could be successful in that period by merely writing for a town public. Louis XIV was the state and all things had to stem from him. It is suggested above that Molière's chief appeal was to the bourgeoisie. To this should have been added "and to the King." For Louis from the beginning was fascinated by Molière's plays. Over half the plays of Molière were written for the court galas, frequently by royal command. As a rule, the tastes of

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[1] Chapman, op. cit., p. 216.

[2] Ibid., p. 218.

the two publics coincided fairly well. However, the court plays were usually funnier, and more immoral. That they were more careless and filled with evidence of haste and negligence should not surprise us, since Molière rarely had longer than two weeks in which to write them. Naturally, it was necessary for court plays to be more spectacular in order to allow other media, such as dancing and music, to be incorporated within them.

The audience of Molière was two-fold--the town and the royal circle. In comparison with the audience of Plautus, this audience was much more sophisticated. The competition was much stiffer, for there were three theatres in operation. If people did not wish to see one play, they could go to another.[1] The audience was more learned; there would be less riff-raff, for the theatre was not free. Says Chapman, "...there never was a public like the public of Molière in which so large a proportion was solid and respectable."[2]

In spite of this "solid and respectable" public, the deportment of a theatre audience of the period would have driven mad a modern actor. The difficulties of the physical plant have been described. Many of the exuberances of the audience stemmed from them--from the hard seats, or no seats at all, from the smoky dimness, from the chill and the heat. Some difficulties arose from differences in reaction

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[1] "...le public variait selon les théâtres et se partageait d'une façon très différente entre L'Hôtel de Bourgogne et le théâtre du Palais Royal."
~~S.v.~~, Eugène Despois, Le théâtre français, op. cit., p. 366.

[2] Chapman, op. cit., p. 188.

from the audience in the "parterre" and that in the loges--for the two were not always amused by the same things. The nobility who visited the theatre frequently found it unnecessary to pay money--or attention--and the servants whom they brought with them were ill-behaved.

By far the greatest hazard, by all accounts, was the soldiery--the Gentlemen of the Royal Guards and the Mousquetaires. They would come to the theatre drunken, and bearing their swords, although this was strictly forbidden by law. Frequent disputes followed.[1] Contemporaries tell us that there were fifty or sixty soldiers in the parterre for the performance of Psyche, and that "Quand la machine de Venus est descendue [il y avait] ...les chansons derisionnaires et frappements de pied...ce qui aurait obligé de cesser."[2] If the audience was not pleased with the play, it threw not rotten eggs, but baked apples. Later it became more refined to whistle, siffler. "The restless pit might whistle and howl like a zoo, and pelt the players."[3] The smart women arrived late, chattering; the servants bickered; the girls selling wine and fruit hawked their wares. As a result of all this, guards were usually needed to keep order both within and without the theatres of Paris.

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1 "Il n'y est question que des scènes de violence, des portiers tués à la comédie."
~~S.V.~~, Despois, Le Théâtre français, op. cit., p. 153.

2 William Leonard Schwartz, "Molière's Theatre in 1672-73: Light from Le Registre d'Hubert," P.M.L.A., XXVI (June, 1941), pp. 395-427.

3 Lewis, op. cit., p. 47.

Like Plautus, Molière faced the basic problem of any playwright--to keep an audience interested. His problem was compounded because his audience was not only restless, it was also quite sophisticated. He dared not order it to be quiet as Plautus used to; he did not venture to insult it by telling the plot. To avoid boring it he reduced the soliloquies and had vital information passed on in dialogues. Thus, in the Prologue to the Amphitryon, he uses a conversation between Night and Mercury. The Prologue does not give the plot, but the prerequisites, which make it necessary for Mercury to ask Night to hold back her horses to create a long night. In this way the Prologue becomes an integral part of the play, not a plea for attention as in Plautus.

For a more sophisticated audience it was necessary to stress characterization, that is to provide characters who were real individuals with real motives and who were consistent. The French dramatists of the period were placing less stress on double plots and mistaken identity,[1] and preferred themes in which human weaknesses furnished the mainspring of the action. Molière followed the trend.[2] This is partially why, in writing L'Avare, he deviated so greatly

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[1] Duckworth, op. cit., p. XXXVI.

[2] "The development from comedies of pure plot to comedies of character is seen in the dramatic output of Molière, whose finest qualities are his insight into human nature and his marvellous skill in revealing character." Ibid.

from the original plot. No longer is it the simple play of a miser who is duped of his gold with a little love interest on the side. Instead, it is the story of a strong character, the miser, so wrapped up in his gold that he has no natural feelings toward anything.[1] He seems to hate his children; he practises usury of the worst sort; love, to him, is a secondary emotion. "...il vous aime fort, je le sais; mais il aime un peu plus l'argent....", says Frosine to Mariane when speaking about the miser.[2] Around this individual, Molière has placed a host of minor characters. The miser now has a son and a daughter. A love has been provided for the son--and for the father. Others--the matchmaker, a host of servants--have been added. One actually loses track of the gold. When it is stolen it is somewhat of a surprise. However, the miser remains in character throughout, for, at the end, his pot of gold is still as important to him as it was at the beginning.[3] To a demanding, aware audience, this consistency of character would be important.

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[1] "L'avarice a tué en lui tout sentiment humain et tout sens moral." ~~S.V.~~, Pierre Brisson, Molière, Sa Vie dans ses Oeuvres (Montreal: Gallimard, 1943), p. 40.

[2] Despois, Oeuvres de Molière, op. cit., L'Avare, Act IV, Scene I, p. 158.

[3] Anselme: "Soit. Allons vite faire part de notre joie à votre mère."
Harpagon: "Et moi, voir ma chère cassette."
~~S.V.~~, ibid., Act V, Scene VI, p. 204.

Parts of the play read almost like a comedy of manners. The dowry scene, with its liturgy "sans dot"[1], the scene of the catalogue of terms of the usurer,[2] the instructions to the servants as to how to hide the stains on their livery,[3]--all this is surely taken closely from the society of the period. Another interesting reflection on the goût du siècle is the gift given to Alcmène. Plautus had her receive a gold bowl; obviously this would have seemed uninspired to the French audience, so it is changed to a cluster of diamonds--something which any French woman could appreciate.

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[1] Ibid., Act I, Scene V, pp. 84, 85, 86.

[2] "...Plus, un luth de Bologne, garni de toutes ses cordes ou peu s'en faut.
Plus un trou-madame, et un damier avec un jeu de l'oie renouvelé des Grecs, fort propres à passer le temps lorsque l'on n'a que faire...."
~~S.V.~~, ibid., Act II, Scene I, p. 96.

[3] "Paix. Range cela adroitement du côté de la muraille, et présentez toujours le devant au monde. Et vous, tenez toujours votre chapeau ainsi lorsque vous servirez."
~~S.V.~~, ibid., Act III, Scene I, p. 123.

The taste of the women in the audience was influencing the playwright. One must remember also that women were now acting on the stage. The women were fast becoming Précieuses and were already investigating the cult of refinement and delicacy. There was the beginning of drawing room life in the city mansions. As a result, it seemed necessary to remove vulgarity from the plays. Thus we do not find coarse references to the Miser's saving ways,[1] or to the Mistress's well-fed look.[2] Vulgarity in love would shock also. Love had changed greatly since the time of Plautus, and, during the period of Molière was changing even more. To begin with, the love portrayed had to be pure.

Thus, in L'Avare, we come upon this dialogue between Valère and Harpagon:

Harpagon: "Hé! dis-moi donc un peu. tu n'y as point touché?
Valère: Moi y toucher? Ah! vous lui faites tort, aussi bien qu'à moi; et c'est d'une ardeur toute pure et respectueuse que j'ai brûlé pour elle."
Harpagon: "Brûlé pour ma cassette!"
Valère: "J'aimerois mieux mourir que de lui avoir fait paroître aucune pensée offensante: elle est trop sage et trop honnête pour cela."[3]

There is no longer any question of the girl being violated--or pregnant. It is romantic love. Valère has saved Elise from drowning. He has given up everything to remain with her.

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[1] Lindsay, op. cit., Aulularia, Act II, Scene IV, lines 304-305.

[2] Ibid., Amphitruo, Act II, Scene II, line 667.

[3] Despois, Oeuvres de Molière, op. cit., L'Avare, Act V, Scene III, p. 190.

The quality of love in the Amphitryon is interesting, too. In Plautus, the strength of love of the couple seems obvious; Alcumena, when accused, has dignity and Amphitruo, though injured, has some measure of self-restraint. Molière's Amphitryon reacts like a much younger, more emotional man, which, indeed perhaps he is. Certainly Mercury tells Night that Amphitryon and Alcmène are just married, and this is why Jupiter is enjoying himself[1] so thoroughly, while in the other play, they seem to have been married for some time. The creation of Plautus has much more righteous indignation in it. Compare the two. In Plautus we read,

Amp.: Perdidisti.
Sos.: Quid tibi est?
Amph.: Haec me modo ad mortem dedit.
Alc.: Quid iam, amabo?
Amph.: Ne me appella.
Sos.: Quid tibi est?
Amp.: Perii miser, quia pudicitae huius uitium me hinc apsente est additum.[2]

From Molière in about the same place in the play, one gets,

Alcmene: De qui donc vous venger? et quel manque de foi
Vous fait ici me traiter de coupable?
Amphitryon: Je ne sais pas, mais ce n'étoit pas moi;
et c'est un désespoir qui de tout rend capable.[3]

Then both Amphitryons leave, that of Plautus threatening a divorce, that of Molière threatening the fury of his "just" wrath. In fact, in the Molière play, it is Alcmène who threatens the divorce.[4]

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[1] Ibid., Amphitryon, Prologue, p. 360.

[2] Lindsay, Amphitruo, op. cit., Act II, Scene II, line 809 ff.

[3] Despois, op. cit., Amphitryon, Act II, Scene II, p. 416.

[4] Ibid., Act II, Scene II, p. 416.

Obviously family relationships between men and women have changed much since the Roman Republic.

There is one more example of the portrayed weakness of Amphitryon in Molière's play. In a fit of self-pity, he wishes that Alcmène may have gone mad:

> "...voir si ce n'est point une vaine chimère
> Qui sur ses sens troublés ait su prendre crédit.
> Ah! fasse le Ciel équitable
> Que ce penser soit véritable,
> Et que pour mon bonheur elle ait perdu l'esprit.[1]

Compare with this the deep affection of the other Amphitryon, when, with the mystery still unravelled, he rejoices that the twins were born without difficulty.

There is yet another interesting reaction to love in Molière's Amphitryon. Jupiter is attracted to Alcmène. In Plautus that attraction is purely sensual. In Molière, Jupiter is shown feeling love for Alcmène and jealousy toward Amphitryon. He tries to encourage Alcmène to prefer the lover to the husband. In making up the quarrel, he insists that it is the husband who has hurt her, not the lover.[2]

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[1] Ibid., Act III, Scene I, p. 440.

[2] "L'époux, Alcmène, a commis tout le mal;
C'est l'époux qu'il vous faut regarder en coupable
L'amant n'a point de part à ce transport brutal,..."
Ibid., Act II, Scene VI, p. 431.

This is in vain, of course. Alcmène makes no distinction. Thus she remains honest. The assumption seems clear that to the audience of the period, it was essential to camouflage the sensual love of Jupiter and make it romantic. Otherwise, the affair would be too shocking. It was necessary to disguise adultery with pretty words.

Obviously the plot of the Amphitryon was rather shocking to the society of Molière's period. This moral uneasiness is even more striking when it is noted that the Amphitryon was written as a court play just at the time when Louis XIV had taken a new mistress, Mme. de Montespan, a mistress whose husband was vigorously complaining against the honour done to him. The play had to be presented with some apologies. This is the tenor of the Prologue. Mercure is rather apologetic for Jupiter; Night is clearly disgusted and shocked.[1]

The reaction of Amphitryon when he learns the explanation is also worth considering. Compared with the creation of Plautus, this man is still extremely unhappy and upset. Says Jupiter:

"Un partage avec Jupiter
N'a rien du tout qui déshonore."[2]

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[1] Mercury: "...ses pratiques, je crois, ne vous sont pas nouvelles.
Bien souvent pour la terre il néglige les cieux....
Et sait cent tours ingénieux
Pour mettre à bout les plus cruelles."
Exclaims Night somewhat later:
"Voilà sans doute un bel emploi
Que le grand Jupiter m'apprête,
Et l'on donne un nom fort honnête
Au service qu'il veut de moi."
[redacted]., ibid., Prologue, pp. 360, 362.

[2] Ibid., Act III, Scene X, pp. 469-70.

Says Amphitryon--nothing. He is doubtless too overwhelmed to speak. Sosie is left with the last speech:

> "...Sur telles affaires, toujours
> Le meilleur est de ne rien dire."[1]

As one would expect, the dramatic construction of the plays of Molière is stronger than that of Plautus. This, as mentioned previously, can be explained by the large theatrical tradition from which he could draw, as well as by the greater demands of his audience, which was more sophisticated with reference to the theatre because of the organized competitive theatrical system which it had the privilege of attending. Note, for example, the construction of L'Avare. The triple plot develops, tied in by the love of father and son for one girl, and by the stolen sack of gold, which, when returned, will assure the happy ending. At the conclusion, not only are the difficulties overcome and is the ending happy, but the character of Harpagon has remained constant.

Fewer changes are made in the Amphitryon. The lacuna in Plautus is filled in with the obvious continuation of the plot. The most basic changes are the omission of the birth of the twins and of the serpent episode, episodes which Molière has left out probably because of the ill effect upon the timing, because of their far-fetched quality, and finally because of the lack of delicacy of having a birth just off stage.

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[1] Ibid., Act III, Scene X, p. 471.

The society for which Molière wrote appears, therefore, to have been demanding, knowledgeable and yet not over-serious. It was a two-fold society: king and court, and townsfolk. His plays had to suit both, and there was much competition to gain the favour of either group. The changing place of women also affected his plays. These were some of the reasons for the changes which Molière made in Plautus' works.

CHAPTER V

The Authors and their Purposes

There seems to be one last possible explanation of the changes made by Molière in the works of Plautus--the differences in the two authors. Admittedly their lives were partially determined by the society in which they lived, but the plays were affected by what each author wished to achieve. The life and goal of each author may thus be important in considering his plays.[1]

Of the life of Plautus we know very little. What we do know is found in Aulus Gellius, in Cicero, and in Cato Maior.[2] Traditionally Titus Maccius Plautus was born in Umbria at Sarsina about 254 B.C. He seems to have worked in the theatre, made enough money to leave it, invested the money, lost it, earned money working in a mill and then to have turned about 224 B.C. to writing plays. He had three plays written before he was able to leave the mill. He died in 184 B.C., in the censorship of Cato. As has been previously noted, about one hundred and thirty plays were attributed to him; at present we have twenty-one plays which are said to be genuine.

What can be learned from such a meagre knowledge of his background? Something rather important. Certainly it was a great

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1 "...in each country the classical influence appeared in a somewhat different form and was moulded both by national characteristics and by the qualities of the individual dramatist."
~~S.V.~~, Duckworth, op. cit., p. XXXVI.

2 Aulus Gellius III, 3, 9; Cicero, Brutus 15, 60; Cato Maior 14, 50.
~~S.V.~~, Taladoire, op. cit., p. 49.

achievement for a provincial from the Gallic frontier to master the spirit of New Greek Comedy sufficiently to adapt it to Roman taste. This indicates a man of superior intelligence and comprehension. Why should a man so gifted not have achieved more than he did? Says Duff, "His social and historical environment acted as a check on his growth into a consistent artist."[1] One aspect of his social environment which has not been considered here is his means of earning a living. How did he exist when he was not acting and no one was buying his plays? Surely the actors and playwrights of early Rome must have earned a meagre living by entertaining the public and serving the great as opportunity offered--by singing, dancing, clowning, by writing lampoons or panegyrics as their talent and training allowed. Furthermore, the status of actors was apparently as uncertain as the status of the theatre throughout the Republic. The senate, while insisting upon tragedy and comedy for the festivals, still refused to allow the building of a permanent theatre for fear of increasing licentiousness. Teuffel tells us that respectability for poets had been secured by the grant of corporate rights to the poets as early as 548 A.U.C. (205 B.C.).[2] Still it would seem that actors must not have been numerous, for very few plays were produced each year and only one performance of each play was given. It was necessary, doubtless, for the dramatist to take roles, train amateurs and employ actors from other areas during

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[1] J. Wight Duff, A Literary History of Rome, ed. A. M. Duff (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1953), p. 127.

[2] Teuffel, op. cit., p. 104.

the time of need, and to occupy himself somehow during the slack period. According to Tenny Frank, slaves as actors were not heard of before the time of Cicero.[1] Duff would debate this statement, basing his opinion on Mercury's remarks in the Amphitryon.[2] At any rate, it seems hard to believe that in a society which refused to build a permanent theatre, actors were treated with great respect.

Plautus depended upon an uncertain profession which was extremely busy at certain seasons of the year, extremely slow at others, and never particularly well received by honest folk. The result, as Beare puts it, was that "The object of Plautus was to interest and amuse his rough audiences and he pursues this object at the expense of what is noble as well as what is base."[3]

Certainly his work is practical. It amuses. We discover in it inconsistencies of character and carelessness of composition, padded scenes, looseness of dramatic structure, jokes on dramatic machinery, stock plots, and stock characters. There is a profuse riot of solo speeches and passages which becomes a gross weakness of composition, pointing to poverty of technique. We must not, however, deny Plautus all skill in dramatic technique and character pointing. The Roman audience, as has been suggested, did not want to be instructed. They were interested only in farcical comedies, broad humour, and familiar

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[1] Tenny Frank, "The Status of Actors at Rome," Classical Philology, XXVI (January, 1931), p. 17.

[2] Duff, 1909, op. cit., p. 159.

[3] W. Beare, "Plautus and his Public," op. cit., p. 106.

type characters. They asked only to be amused. Plautus' chief objective was to meet this desire.

With such an audience, and with his own need to make his livelihood, it is no wonder that Plautus failed to write the most elevating poetry and that he did not aim at artistic unity. He has been criticized for lack of morality.[1] His aim was not to improve. It was, first and foremost, to entertain.

The life of Molière, as is to be expected, is much better known to us. To select from it what is closely related to his development as a playwright is to be attempted here. Molière was born in 1622, the eldest child of a rich bourgeois who had connection with the court, for he was tapissier-valet de chambre to the king. The lad's mother died when he was very young, and his grandfather, according to tradition, took him frequently to the theatre and to the shows on the Pont Neuf. The boy was well-educated, particularly in classics, at the College de Clermont, since his father hoped he might continue with the post at court. Instead, Molière met Madeleine Béjart and began his dramatic career. Early failure in Paris sent the troupe out to play the provinces for about twelve years. On returning to Paris, Molière made an immediate success, found himself a patron, Monsieur, brother to the King, and proceeded to write and act and cough, for he had a lung disease, one which eventually brought about his death. As he struggled with this disease, he also struggled with the constant attacks of other writers

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[1] Duff, 1953, op. cit., p. 128.

who were jealous of him. At forty, he married Armande Béjart, sister to Madeleine, or as some say, daughter. She was only twenty, a minx, a coquette, and soon was to make Molière wish he had never married her. They separated, but were reunited just before he died in 1673.

His position as an actor in seventeenth century France was uncertain. The ordinance published by Louis XIII in 1641 in favour of actors, declaring them to be good men, had helped little in face of the strong opposition from the church. The church would not marry, bury or baptize actors. Molière, when he knew he was dying, renounced his profession, but even then, it was difficult to find a priest to come to him. Armande had to visit the king himself, in order to have her husband buried in consecrated ground. It is true that Molière was familiar with the king and nobles. It is reported that he ate with the king. Still, his profession was held in disrepute by the great mass of the people.

Because Molière was a bourgeois, we find constant traces of bourgeois life in his plays--even when he is making fun of them, as in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.[1] Says Giraud, "Molière cannot leave his past behind him. He paints bourgeois milieu with the most complaisance...."[2] His early interest in the theatre would seem to

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[1] "On n'est pas né pour rien bourgeois de Paris, fils et petit-fils de bourgeois."
~~B.V.~~, Victor Giraud, "Molière à travers son oeuvre," Revue des Deux Mondes. Period 8, XXXIV (Aug. 15, 1936), p. 936.

[2] Ibid., p. 942.

have arisen from the frequent visits paid to it as a child. His excellent classical education and his love for Latin gave him the background in Roman comedy which permitted him to write such plays as the Amphitryon and L'Avare. We know that his sickness was utilized frequently in his plays; his cough became one of his comic effects.[1] Similarly, his hatred of doctors is reflected in most of his plays.[2]

Liaisons with the actresses of his troupe, particularly Madeleine Bejart, gave him the beginnings of an education in love. Armande finished the instruction. It seems safe to say that without Armande, some of his greatest plays would not have been written. Certainly his women helped him in the picture of married love shown in the Amphitryon. Without Armande, would his Amphitryon have reacted with such despair at the knowledge of his wife's infidelity? Without Armande, would he have written bitterly:

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[1] "Je n'en ai pas de grandes, Dieu merci. Il n'y a que ma fluxion, qui me prend de temps en temps."
~~S.V.~~., Despois, op. cit., L'Avare, Act II, Scene V, p. 117.

[2] Valère: "Il faut demander un délai et feindre quelque maladie.
Élise: "Mais on découvrira la feinte, si l'on appelle des médecins."
Valère: "Vous moquez-vous? Y connoissent-ils quelquechose? Allez, allez, vous pourrez avec eux avoir quel mal il vous plaira, ils vous trouveront des raisons pour vous dire d'où cela vient."
~~S.V.~~., ibid., Act I, Scene V, p. 87.

Harp.: "Il faudra voir cela. Mais, Frosine, il y a encore une chose qui m'inquiète. La fille est jeune, comme tu vois, et les jeunes gens d'ordinaire n'aiment que leurs semblables, ne cherchent que leur compagnie. J'ai peur qu'un homme de mon âge ne soit pas de son goût; et que cela ne vienne à produire chez moi certains petits désordres qui ne m'accommoderoient pas."[1]

The quarrels with the literary set in Paris hurt Molière deeply. He responded with his pen. He bled openly. He reacted strongly against that portion of society which rejected actors. Above all, his early relation with the court as tapissier-valet, and his later successful relations in the theatre gave him an opportunity to observe the king and the court and to imitate them, for he was the éternel contemplateur, and himself said, "je n'ai plus qu'à regarder le monde."[2] He knew well all milieux and as a result of his observations he developed a psychology of humanity, and incidentally, gave us "Le tableau le plus complet que nous ayons de la société du XVIIe siècle."[3] Moreover, his acquaintance with the court fired him with ambition to become the most popular playwright of the day.

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[1] Ibid., Act II, Scene V, p. 114.

[2] Schwartz, op. cit., p. 942.

[3] Ibid., p. 943.

Plautus wrote solely to amuse his public. Molière had a greater need. He had to express his problems and ideals, his solutions, his triumphs, and as a result his comedy was sometimes deeper than that of Plautus, and perhaps sometimes less funny.[1]

Thus the life of the man, or, the man himself, is more closely connected with his work than is usual. Says Brisson, "...aimer vraiment son oeuvre, c'est chercher l'homme en elle."[2] La Grange, a contemporary of Molière, and his faithful supporter, writes, "...il s'y est joué le premier en plusieurs endroits, sur des affaires de sa famille et qui regardaient ce que se passait dans son domestique."[3] This seems to be one of his greatest strengths; when we read the plays of Molière, we understand the man himself.

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[1] "Dans presque toutes ses comédies nous trouvons un raisonneur... qui soutient la thèse chère à Molière et développe sa pensée." ~~S.V.~~, Auguste Bailly, L'École classique française (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1940), p. 42.

[2] Pierre Brisson, op. cit., p. 7.

[3] Schwartz, op. cit., p. 943.

Conclusions

As a result of the foregoing analysis of the changes made in the Amphitruo and the Aulularia by Molière, it seems probable that these alterations were, in part at least, due to four factors:

1. The changes in theatrical tradition between the time of Plautus and that of Molière.
2. The difference in the type of theatre in use.
3. The differing type of audience in Molière's day.
4. The differences between the objectives and personalities of Molière and Plautus.

The changes made by Molière were often caused by more than one of these factors. Therefore, it may be useful, in conclusion, to state the major changes, and to indicate which of the above-mentioned four factors appear to have been responsible for the alterations. The changes appear to have been of three types: structural changes, changes in detail and changes of mood. For purposes of clarity, even though some repetition will be inevitable, the two plays will be considered separately.

In the Amphitryon, the first structural change which Molière has made is in the Prologue. It has been integrated into the play by having Mercury ask Night to lengthen her stay. Dialogue has been introduced, and so has stage machinery, since both god and goddess were suspended in the air. These changes occurred because of a larger theatrical

tradition, because of the physical nature of the theatre and the machinery in use, and because of the more demanding society.

Another structural change was made by adding an extra character, the wife of Sosie, Cléanthis. She was added partially because of the theatrical tradition, partially because of the physical form of the theatre which was better suited to dialogue than to monologue and partially to please the more demanding audience. Finally, the change may well have been made because of the enjoyment which Molière obtained when portraying different kinds of love. For example, in this instance, he compared bourgeois love and the love of Amphitryon and Alcmène.

In addition, the plot of the Amphitryon has been tightened; the lacuna found in the Plautine play has been filled in; the birth of twins and the killing of the serpents have been omitted. Doubtless, these changes resulted from the larger theatrical tradition, as well as from the more demanding audience, which, because of the women in it, was also more insistent upon delicacy.

Apart from the more important structural changes, there are changes in detail. One which has been noted is the changing of the bowl received by the Alcumena of Plautus to a cluster of diamonds for Molière's Alcmène. Surely this change was made to please a more sophisticated audience. The cajoling of this audience was omitted. This may be because the audience, more familiar with the theatre, was quieter, or perhaps because it was more comfortable since, for the most part, rather than standing in the open air, as in Plautus' day,

tradition, because of the physical nature of the theatre and the tendency in use, and because of the more demanding society.

Another structural change was made by adding an extra character, the wife of Amelo, Clementia. She was added partially because of the theatrical tradition, partially because of the physical form of the theatre which was better suited to dialogue than to monologue and partially to please the more demanding audience. Finally, the change may well have been made because of the enjoyment which Molière obtained from contrasting different kinds of love. For example, in this instance, he compared [illegible] love and the love of [illegible] and [illegible].

In addition, the plot of the *[illegible]* has been simplified; the scenes found in the [illegible] play [illegible] the birth of twins and the killing of the serpent have been omitted. Doubtless, these changes resulted from the larger theatrical tradition, as well as from the more demanding audience, which, because of the women in it, was also more insistent upon delicacy.

Apart from the more important structural changes, there are changes in detail. One which has been noted is the changing of the [illegible] received by the [illegible] of [illegible] to a [illegible] of [illegible] for [illegible]. Surely this change was made to please a more sophisticated audience. The [illegible] of this audience was [illegible]. This may be because the audience, more familiar with the theatre, was quieter, or perhaps because it was more comfortable since, for the most part, rather than standing in the open air, as in [illegible], [illegible]

it was seated within a building. Also, this audience, being in a smaller theatre, would be easily able to recognize the actors, both because of the costumes, and because it was possible for members of the audience to have seen the play previously, and, possibly, to have read it. The wild horseplay rushing back and forth has been avoided. Perhaps the audience was too sophisticated to enjoy it. Furthermore, the stage was too small to permit it. Doubtless the size of the stage was the reason for the omission of the supernumeraries which Plautus used as live scenery.

As to the changes in mood, there are some important examples. First, the report of the battle which the Sosia of Plautus enjoyed describing for his Roman audience has been thoroughly changed, since the Parisian audience of court and town was not likely to be enthralled by a Roman battle scene. Furthermore, the approach to love was completely changed. In part this change may be attributed to the wider tradition of Molière's theatre. But the romantic approach to love in Molière's plays must surely have been greatly influenced by the more sophisticated audience he faced, particularly since it included many women. The characterization of Amphitryon and Jupiter was also changed in order to fit in with the different concept of the relationship between the sexes. Religious feeling toward Mercury and Jupiter has also been altered, as would be expected in a Christian society.

As has been noted previously, Molière made important changes in the Aulularia of Plautus when he wrote L'Avare. An important feature of the structural changes is the numerous extra characters which were added. They include Cléante, Mariane, Frosine, Maître Simon, Dame Claude, Brindavoine and La Merluche. These personages were put in mainly to show the character of the miser more clearly. They develop a more complicated plot-line, with more opportunity for dialogue. These changes resulted from the stage requirements and the demands of the more sophisticated audience, and perhaps also from the wider theatrical tradition available.

It has been suggested that an important feature of L'Avare is the change from the miser depicted in the Aulularia to Harpagon, a miser whose miserliness dominated him completely. The whole of L'Avare, in fact, revolves around Molière's characterization of Harpagon. This deepening of the miser's dominating trait was, in part, due to a wider theatrical tradition. But it must also have pleased the more sophisticated audience of Molière's day, while, at the same time, it was an expression of Molière's deep interest in human nature.

The changes in detail in L'Avare are frequent. The stage set depicts the house and the garden. This is a result of differences in the type of theatre. Once again, and for the same reasons as were suggested previously, the audience was not cajoled. The beatings in Plautus have been transformed to a pursuit back and forth across the

stage, a change caused, obviously, by the shape of the stage and its smaller dimensions. Also, because of the size of the stage, there was no crowd acting as live scenery.

From the wider theatrical tradition came traces of other authors, traces such as the usurer's list, the false reconciliation and the welcoming of Mariane. The attack on doctors and the addition of a cough for Harpagon came from the life of Molière himself.

The changes in mood are derived in part from the change in the character of Harpagon, a change which, as suggested above, Molière wanted to make because of his interest in human nature. In this connection, it might be noted that, because of Harpagon's miserliness, additional psychological effects are produced in L'Avare. For instance, there is a current of dislike and, in fact, almost hatred from the miser toward his son and daughter, and a like counter-current flowing back from them toward him. Such a feeling of a son or daughter toward their father would have been impossible in the day of Plautus, when patria potestas and pietas were, theoretically, in full bloom. But, in the much later society of Molière's day, such an attitude between family members was quite possible.

Here, then, we have a change due to the difference in the society and life of two widely separated periods of time. Similarly, the love story has changed completely, both because the attitude toward love has changed and also because of a wider literary tradition, but certainly, too, because of the feelings of Molière himself toward love. As in the

Amphitryon, vulgarity is missing from this play, an omission which, as already has been suggested, is probably a concession to the female element in the audience.

Finally, just as Plautus introduced Roman elements to give his plays a Roman atmosphere, so the social habits and conventions of Molière's own day are constantly used by him to create a French atmosphere. These same features, combined with the characterization of Harpagon, the attitude toward love, and the psychological currents flowing through L'Avare make it almost a true comedy of manners. This last point, in itself, illustrates how the type of society and audience for which Molière wrote, made it necessary for him to make important changes in both the Amphitryon and the Aulularia.

It seems evident, then, that Molière adapted the plays of Plautus to meet the new theatrical traditions of his own day, to suit the type of theatre in which his plays were produced, to satisfy the tastes of the more sophisticated audience of the time of Louis XIV and to give expression to his own personal objectives and theatrical ideals. In so doing, he produced two of his finest comedies.

[illegible], although it tends from time to time, to [illegible] [illegible], or [illegible] [illegible], is practically [illegible] to the [illegible] [illegible] to the audience.

Finally, just as Plato [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], so the radical [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] used in [illegible] to a [illegible] [illegible]. There are [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] with the [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible], the [illegible] toward [illegible], and the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. This last point, in fact, [illegible] the type of society and audience for which [illegible] works, and is necessary for him to [illegible] [illegible] or in [illegible] the [illegible] and the [illegible].

It [illegible] evident, then, that [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] to [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] of his own [illegible], to [illegible] the type of [illegible] in which his plays were [illegible], to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] of [illegible] and to give [illegible] to his own [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible]. In so doing, he [illegible] two of the [illegible] [illegible].

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